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ABSTRACT

Consisting of four modules of three sessions each, this Head Start parenting education curriculum offers parents opportunities to look at their lives from new angles and to share ideas and support with other parents. The first module focuses on daily life and ways to improve it. Parents try out various exercises and relaxation techniques, explore their attitudes toward food and money, and look at ways to manage their time more efficiently. The second module promotes parents' confidence in their roles as prime educators of their children. By looking at children's play, parents consider how to promote and support their children's development and prepare them for the challenges of school. The third module gives parents opportunities to examine family life today, to value their own family, and to gain group support for strengthening their family. The fourth module offers parents a view of their present situation in terms of (1) the perspective of the individual life span, (2) the influence of one generation on the next, and (3) the history of each parent's race and ethnic group in America. Parents are helped to clarify their values about sexuality, relationships between men and women, and ethnic identity, and to discuss ways to transmit their values to their children. (RH)

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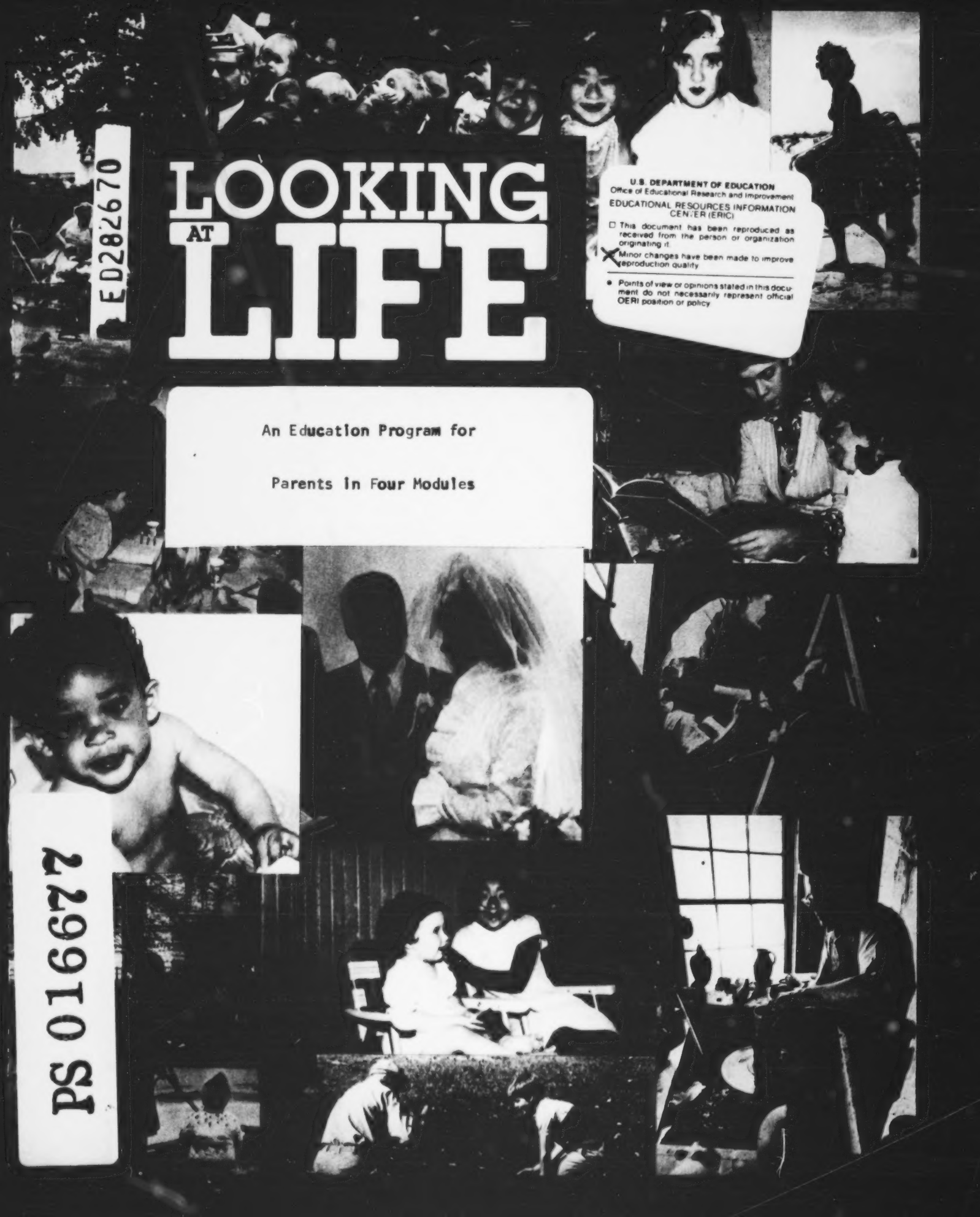

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LOOKING AT LIFE

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An Education Program for

Parents in Four Modules

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LOOKING AT LIFE

An Education Pr for Parents in Fo

LOOKING AT LIFE is an education program that focuses on parents. It offers them opportunities to look at their lives from new angles and to share ideas and support with other parents. **LOOKING AT LIFE** consists of four modules each with three sessions approximately three-hours long. Each module can be used independently or several can be grouped for a longer program. Sessions are conducted by one or two leaders using the step-by-step instructions provided by the session plans. Groups of 8 to 20 parents explore a wide range of topics using a variety of learning modes: discussion, brainstorming, reading information sheets, role-play, art activities, children's games and play, exercise, and relaxation techniques.

Philosophy and Approach

LOOKING AT LIFE offers parents opportunites to grow without asking them to change. It is based on the assumption that parents are mature, responsible adults capable of making their own decisions about their lives and those of their children. It does not promote a particular viewpoint on any subject; rather, it opens the door to consideration of a variety of ideas. Many subjects are introduced to whet parents' appetites for more information and to help them identify aspects of their lives which they would like to improve. Because parents need to feel accepted and comfortable before they are willing to entertain new ideas, express their feelings, or try out new ways of behaving, **LOOKING AT LIFE** is designed to promote group support. The activities draw on the participants' own experiences and, consequently, are appropriate for any group of parents. Each group who uses **LOOKING AT LIFE** colors it with its own personality, characteristics, background and experiences.

Program Goals

- To look at your life from new angles.
- To consider new ideas and new ways of doing things.
- To identify aspects of your life which you would like to improve.
- To share ideas and support with other parents.

Program Materials

The materials for **LOOKING AT LIFE** are session plans, information sheets, and a poster. The session plans provide guidance for the group leader and step-by-step directions for conducting the activities. Information sheets are for the parents; they are distributed individually during the sessions. The poster, called "We Are A Family," is used in the first session of **LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY**.

Leadership Training

While those who wish to lead **LOOKING AT LIFE** parent groups need not have academic degrees or previous experience, they do need thorough group leadership training. The training capitalizes on the natural abilities of suitable group leaders: ease with and interest in people; an accepting, non-judgemental attitude; organizational skills; flexibility, willingness to learn; and a desire to serve others.

LOOKING AT LIFE group leadership training provides a structured group experience in which individuals: become familiar with the curriculum, deal with the issues it raises, practice conducting activities, learn group facilitation skills, and begin to develop their own leadership styles.

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our Modules

Development

LOOKING AT LIFE was designed and developed under a contract with the national Head Start Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Office of Human Development Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, by Research Assessment Management (RAM), Inc., located at 1320 Fenwick Lane, Suite 105, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. The Project Director and Training Coordinator was Angela Edwards Peebles and the Curriculum Specialist and Training Director was Katherine Kenny Bayly. The curriculum was field-tested with parents of varied racial and ethnic groups in Head Start centers in cities, towns, and rural areas across the country. Based on the field-test, revisions were made in the curriculum. Research Assessment Management, Inc. was authorized to provide group leadership training; and the first group leadership training was conducted by RAM in August, 1986.

Series Overview

LOOKING AT LIFE DAY BY DAY focuses on daily life and ways to improve it. Parents try out various exercises and relaxation techniques, explore their attitudes toward food and money, and look at ways to manage their time more efficiently.

Session 1: Up In the Morning
Session 2: Moving Along
Session 3: Growing Strong

LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN promotes parents' confidence in their roles as prime educators of their children. By looking at children's play, parents consider how to promote and support their children's development and prepare them for the challenges of school.

Session 1: OK, Let's Play
Session 2: All in the Game
Session 3: Time Out!

LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY gives parents opportunities to examine family life today, to value their own family, and to gain group support for strengthening their family.

Session 1: Family Albums
Session 2: Family Treasures
Session 3: Family Portraits

LOOKING AT LIFE OVER THE YEARS offers the parents a view of their present situation in the perspective of the individual life span, the influence of one generation on the next, and the history of their race and ethnic group in America. Parents begin to clarify their values about sexuality, relationships between men and women, and ethnic identity and discuss how to convey them to children.

Session 1: In A Lifetime
Session 2: From Generation to Generation
Session 3: Our New Land and Old

Prepared for:
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Human Development Services
Administration for Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau

Designed and Developed by:
Research Assessment Management, Inc.
1320 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20910

A Project Conducted Under:
Contract #HHS-105-85-1519

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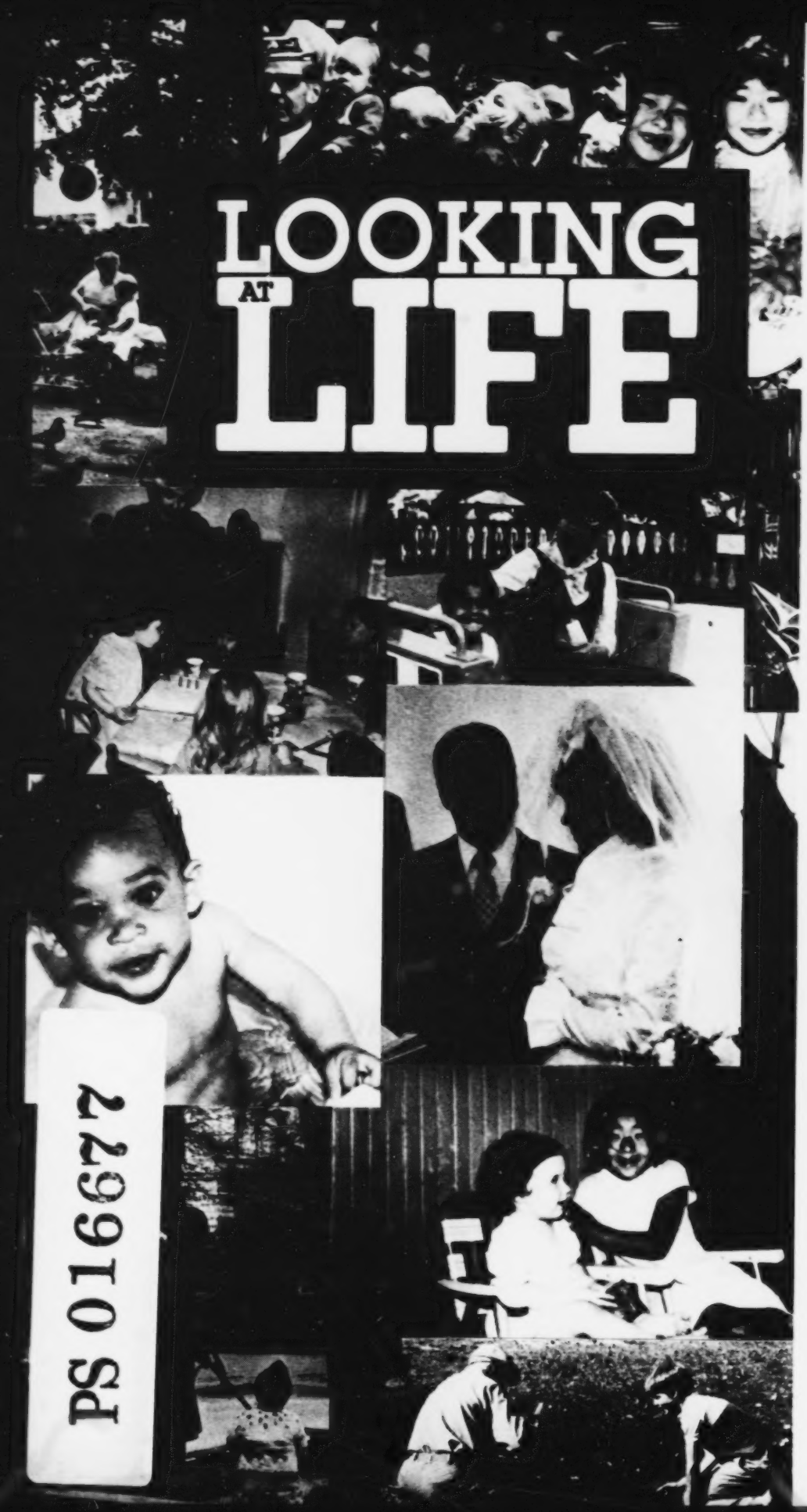

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Day by Day

Looking at Life Day by Day focuses on daily life and ways to improve it. Parents have an opportunity to look at their attitudes, accomplishments, and problems concerning time, money and nutrition. During each three hour session, they exercise and practice relaxation techniques. By sharing ideas in a supportive group setting, parents gain confidence in their ability to handle the stress of everyday life.

Up in the Morning

- Wake Up to Stretching
- All the Things That We Do
- Finding Time
- Time to Relax

Moving Along

- On the Go
- A Penny for Your Thoughts
- Problems and Possibilities
- Taking a Breather

Growing Strong

- Flex Your Muscles
- Food Is. . .
- When, Where, and What I Eat
- Finding Inner Strength

Session 1

Up in the Morning

Goals

To think about the benefits of stretching your muscles and to learn how to stretch.

To look at all the things you accomplish in your daily life.

To consider how to organize your time in order to do more of what you want to do.

To practice relaxing using the technique of progressive muscle relaxation.

Agenda

Wake up to Stretching

All the Things That We Do

Finding Time

Time to Relax

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Stretching
Brainstorming
My Schedule
My Schedule

STRETCHING

Stretching Is Easy.

It is something we do naturally. But we need to do it safely, so that we don't hurt our muscles. Below are some suggestions for stretching in a safe, relaxing way.

- Warm up your muscles before you stretch by running in place, doing jumping jacks, or taking a hot bath or shower first.
- Relax and breathe normally when you stretch.
- Stretch every day, several times a day.
- Take it easy — if you stretch a muscle too far, it tightens up instead of loosening up and it hurts!

A stretching expert, Bob Anderson, advises people not to bounce up and down or stretch to the point of pain. Instead, he teaches a two-part stretching technique — the easy stretch followed by the developmental stretch. The following description of his technique comes from his book, **Stretching**.

The Easy Stretch

When you begin a stretch, spend 10-30 seconds in the easy stretch. No bouncing! Go to the point where you feel a mild tension, and relax as you hold the stretch. The feeling of tension should subside as you hold the position. If it does not, ease off slightly and find a degree of tension that is comfortable. The easy stretch reduces muscular tightness and readies the tissues for the developmental stretch.

The Developmental Stretch

After the easy stretch, move slowly into the developmental stretch. Again, no bouncing. Move a fraction of an inch further until you again feel a mild tension and hold for 10-30 seconds. Be in control. Again, the tension should diminish; if not, ease off slightly. The developmental stretch fine-tunes the muscles and increases flexibility.

Brainstorming

Often people don't share their ideas with others for fear of being criticized. Brainstorming is a way for everyone to feel comfortable about sharing ideas, because no one is allowed to criticize them. The purpose of brainstorming is to hear every idea: one suggestion triggers another, and in this way good ideas are discovered.

In brainstorming it is very important to follow these four rules:

- **List every idea**, no matter how far out it seems to be. *(One person should be responsible for making the list.)*
- **Don't judge** whether ideas are good or bad, just call them out.
- There should be **no discussion** or comments until after the list is complete.
- **It's all right** to repeat an idea or to add to one already listed.

My Schedule

_____ Day _____ Month _____ Year

What I Must Do Today

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What I Should Do Soon

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What I Would Like To Do Today

_____

_____

_____

_____

A.M.
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
P.M.
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12

My Schedule

Thursday (Day) | March 8 (Month) | 1986 (Year)

What I Must Do Today

- Go to work
- Take kids to and from the sitter and Head Start
- Fix meals
- Buy milk and diapers
- Call mom about Sunday dinner
- Give kids a bath

What I Should Do Soon

- Laundry (before Sunday)
- Make dessert for Sunday
- Return shoes to store
- Pay rent and utility bills (by Tuesday)
- Call Lisa
- Defrost refrigerator

What I Would Like To Do Today

- 30 minutes of exercise
- Watch TV special at 9:00 p.m.
- Read to kids, Wash hair
- Get 8 hours of sleep

A.M.

6

7 — 7:30 take baby to sitter

8 — Drop Kim at Head Start 8:30 - Arrive at work

9

10

11

12

P.M.

1

2 — 2:30 Leave Work

3 — Pick up Kim Pick up baby

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

Session 1: Up in the Morning

In this first session of LOOKING AT LIFE DAY BY DAY, parents will stretch their muscles, consider the need to manage their time, and learn a way to relax. Beginning with a good stretch, parents will discuss the value of stretching and try out some safe stretches. Next, they will brainstorm lists of their daily activities and consider ways to do more of what they want to and less of what they don't. After discussing the value of following a schedule, they will practice planning a schedule in small groups. Finally, they will learn progressive muscle relaxation as a way to manage stress.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

Today, millions of Americans are beginning to exercise. They realize that exercise can improve their health, reduce the bad effects of stress, relieve depression, and promote weight loss, to name a few of its benefits. Stretching is one

form of exercise. It reduces muscle tension, increases flexibility, and improves circulation of the blood. While stretching tunes up your body, it also relaxes your mind. Learning to stretch helps you to manage stress.

Managing your time well is another way to handle stress. By looking at time as something to organize and control, many people can begin finding time to accomplish what they want to and avoid the stressful experiences of being late and not getting things done.

Taking time to relax and learning relaxation techniques can improve your physical and mental health, too. When you hurry, worry, or get upset, your muscles get tight. This tightness makes you feel even more upset and sometimes causes physical problems such as fatigue, muscle spasms, headaches, back pain, and high blood pressure. By developing the habit of relaxing your muscles, you can reduce your feelings of stress and lessen its bad effects on your mind and body. Progressive relaxation, a way of tensing and relaxing muscle

groups in stages, is an easy-to-learn technique of muscle relaxation.

GOALS OF SESSION 1

To think about the benefits of stretching your muscles and to learn how to stretch.

To look at all the things you accomplish in your daily life.

To consider how to organize your time in order to do more of what you want to do.

To practice relaxing using the technique of progressive muscle relaxation.

AGENDA

Wake Up To Stretching

All the Things That We Do

Finding Time

Time to Relax

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session.

Information sheets #1 - 5.

Several sheets of large chart paper, felt-tip markers, and tacks or tape.

Clock or watch with second hand.

Planning Ahead

To prepare for and to lead this session and the ones which follow, it would be wise to ask someone to serve as co-leader. By sharing the tasks of preparation and by supporting each other during the sessions, two people can make the job easier.

The first step in planning ahead is to read all the session plans and information sheets in LOOKING AT LIFE DAY BY DAY so that you see how the activities and sessions flow. Next, reread Session One with particular attention to the purposes and time allotments for each activity. Finally, reread Session One in order to decide how you and your co-leader will share responsibilities in leading the session.

The next step in preparing for the session is to learn the three skills introduced in this session: stretching, muscle relaxation, and brainstorming. Read the information sheet and guidance on stretching and do the stretches

yourself. Next, lead a friend through the stretches to make sure that your instructions are clear and that you are giving the appropriate time for each exercise. Use a clock or watch with a second hand to time the exercise. Practice long enough to be comfortable demonstrating and leading the exercises. In the same manner, try out the relaxation exercise and practice guiding a friend through it. To become comfortable with brainstorming, read information sheet #3 and the guidance in the activity, "All the Things That We Do." If possible, lead a group (co-workers, friends, or family) through this activity for practice.

Getting Started

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity of your choice to acquaint parents with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Give a brief introduction to LOOKING AT LIFE DAY BY DAY touching on the following points:

- Parents will have an opportunity to look at their daily lives in new ways and from new perspectives.

The course will focus on some important aspects of daily life--exercise, relaxation, time management, and nutrition.

Each session will begin with things you might do in the morning and end with things you might do at night.

After giving parents an idea of what the whole course will be like, discuss the goals and agenda for the first session using the large chart you prepared as well as information sheet #1. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

Wake Up to Stretching

(Approximately 40 minutes)

Purposes: To think about the benefits of stretching.

To learn how to stretch and to begin stretching.

Explain to parents that they will begin this activity by closing their eyes and pretending to be asleep, even though they are sitting in their chairs. Allow them to get very quiet and still and then tell them it is time to slowly wake up. As you say this, begin yawning and stretching. Invite parents to yawn and stretch, too. Suggest

that they stretch their arms, neck, shoulders, legs and feet. Invite them to stand up to stretch as you do. Keep on yawning, if you can. When everyone has had a good stretch, ask them to sit down again. Then, begin a brief discussion about stretching using the following questions:

How does stretching make you feel?

What does stretching do for you? Why do people stretch?

Can anyone stretch? Do you have to be in top physical condition to stretch?

Can stretching ever hurt you?

Tell parents that they are now going to learn a safe, gentle method of stretching that everyone can do. (If anyone in the group has had recent physical problems, especially with joints and muscles, or has recently had surgery, they should talk to their doctor before starting any exercise program.) Distribute information sheet #2 and read it aloud. When you are finished, ask parents for their comments or questions.

Next, invite parents to try some stretches that they can do sitting down, with both feet flat on the floor. These will be easy stretches.

Parents should stretch to the point where they feel mild tension and, if the tension doesn't soon let up, they should ease off a bit. Remind them of this as you demonstrate and explain the following stretches adapted from Stretching by Bob Anderson:

1. Lock your fingers together, then straighten your arms out in front of you with your palms facing out. Feel the stretch in your arms and upper back. Hold in an easy stretch. (Count to 20 and remind parents to relax and breathe.)

2. Lock fingers, turn palms upward above your head and straighten your arms. (This is similar to the preceding stretch.) Think of lengthening your arms and feel the stretch through the sides of your rib cage. Hold for 10 seconds, relax. Don't push. Breathe naturally.

3. Hold your right arm just above the elbow with your left hand. Gently pull your elbow toward your left shoulder as you look over your right shoulder. Hold stretch for 10 seconds. (Do both sides.)

4. Cross your right leg over your left so that your right calf is resting on your left thigh. Rotate your right ankle in one direction 5 times and then in the other 5 times. Point your toes and then pull them back and push your heel forward 5 times. (Do both ankles.)

5. Lean forward and let your head and arms drop toward your feet. Hold for 30 seconds. Put your hands on your thighs to help push your body into an upright position.

6. This last stretch will get the tension out of the muscles of your face and make you

smile. Raise your eyebrows and open your eyes as wide as possible. At the same time, open your mouth wide and stick your tongue out. Hold this stretch for five to ten seconds.

Compliment the group on their willingness to try out these stretches and suggest that they devote some time to stretching each day.

All the Things That We Do

(Approximately 45 minutes)

Purposes: To look at all the things that parents accomplish in their daily lives.

To think about how to do more of what you want to and less of what you don't.

Begin by telling parents that the group will learn the technique of brainstorming so that they can share their ideas about all the things parents accomplish in their daily lives. Distribute information sheet #3 which describes the skill of brainstorming. Read the sheet aloud, then repeat the four rules: 1) list every idea; 2) don't judge; 3) don't discuss until the list is complete; 4) repeat or add to ideas, if you wish.

It might help to write these rules on chart paper for reference during this session and in the future.

Take a fresh sheet of chart paper, hang it where all can see, and write "All the Things That We Do" at the top of it. Ask parents to brainstorm a list of all the things that they do in daily life. Write down what parents say on the paper, using their own words without making changes or substitutions. The list might include all the things parents do for themselves, for others, and to keep the household running. The activities to be included do not need to be done every single day, but should be done regularly.

You are likely to need several sheets of paper as parents think of more and more things that they do. When they have finished the list, read it over to them. Then ask parents for their comments. Were they surprised by anything on the list? Did they realize they accomplished so much every day? Were there more of some kinds of activities and fewer of others?

After parents have discussed the list briefly, explain that they will now brainstorm a list entitled, "What I Want to Do, But Don't." Write this at the top of a fresh sheet of chart paper and invite parents to let their imaginations run wild. The list might include necessary tasks, things they would like to do with their families, things they never get a chance to do for themselves, as well as dreams and fantasies.

When the list is complete, read it over to parents. Ask them if they have questions about anything on the list or wish to explain more about something they said. Then choose one or two items from the list and ask parents how a person might find the time to do these. It is likely that someone will suggest eliminating some daily activities that aren't really necessary in order to make time for some activities that they wish to do. At this point, ask parents to turn their attention to the first list they developed, "All the Things That We Do." As you reread the list aloud, ask parents to point out activities they could do less frequently, ask someone else to do, or skip entirely. Conclude the discussion by

asking parents to find a way during the coming week to include one thing that they want to do in the week's activities.

Finding Time

(Approximately 45 minutes)

Purposes: To practice planning a daily schedule.

To think about the value of organizing and structuring time.

Explain to parents that in this activity they will be looking more closely at ways to find time to do both what they have to do and what they want to do. One way to begin this is by looking at what you do each day and planning a schedule. Ask parents to look back on their school days and remember what it was like to follow a schedule. Why do teachers need a schedule? What other workers or institutions follow a schedule? What does a schedule do for people? Would parents benefit from following a schedule? Why or why not?

After parents have discussed these questions, distribute information sheet #4. Explain that it is a blank schedule with spaces for listing activities in three categories: what I must do today; what I should do soon; what I would like to do today. It provides a way to organize your daily activities and to plan when to do them. Tell parents that this blank schedule is for them to use at home, if they wish.

Next, tell parents that you are going to give them a schedule just like information sheet #4, except that it has been partly filled in by an imaginary woman named Ann. Ann is the single mother of two young children aged two and four. Her older child is enrolled in an all-day Head Start program. Ann works at a school from 8:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. five days a week.

On the schedule, Ann has listed what she must do, what she should do, and what she would like to do in the appropriate spaces. She has also filled in the schedule to show the things she absolutely has to do at a certain time. The rest of her

schedule is blank. It will be the group's job to help her plan the rest of her day.

Distribute information sheet #5 and read it aloud. Then lead a discussion using the following questions:

Can Ann do everything that she must do?

Can she do everything that she'd like to do?

Can she fit in some of the things that she should do soon?

What will be the busiest times of her day? Could you give her any tips on saving time during those periods?

After parents have had an opportunity to share some ideas on how to save time and get things done quickly, have the parents form groups of three to five people. Ask each group to select one person to write down their ideas on the schedule. This person will be called the recorder. The group should try to fill in the blank parts of Ann's schedule, beginning with the things she must do. They do not need to go minute by minute, but rather fill in blocks of time. The purpose is to gain practice in planning a day, rather than making a perfect schedule.

Ask the groups to stop 15 minutes before the activity is to end. During the last 15 minutes, each group should select a reporter who will then tell the large group what went on in the small group. The reporter does not need to read the schedule which the group wrote for Ann, but simply summarize the small group discussion. The reporter might tell what problems they had, what activities they included in the schedule, or their own reactions to the task of making a schedule. It is up to the reporter to decide how and what to report.

Bring the activity to a close by thanking all the parents for their contributions and by thanking those who served as recorders and reporters for their willingness to help the group.

Time to Relax

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Purpose: To learn the technique of progressive relaxation to reduce muscle tension and psychological stress.

Explain to the group that they will now try out a way to relax their muscles. This is a good way to deal with stress throughout the day and especially at bedtime.

When people hurry, worry, or get upset, their muscles get tight. This tightness makes them feel even more upset and sometimes causes physical problems such as fatigue, muscle spasms, headaches, back pain, and high blood pressure. By developing the habit of relaxing their muscles, people can reduce their feelings of stress and lessen its effects on their mind and body. Progressive relaxation is a way of tensing and relaxing particular muscles or muscle groups so that you feel the difference between tension and relaxation. It can be practiced sitting or lying down. Each muscle group is tightened for five to seven seconds and then relaxed for 20-30 seconds. This procedure is repeated at least once. If an area remains tense, you can practice up to five times.

Begin by asking parents to get in a comfortable position, close their eyes, and then

relax. Then give them the following directions which are adapted from The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook by Davis, Eshelman, and McKay.

1. Clench both fists and tighten your upper and lower arms. Feel the tension and hold while I count to five. Now relax and let go of the tension. Feel the looseness in your hands and arms. Feel the tension dissolving away. (Relax for 30 seconds and repeat entire procedure.)

2. Wrinkle up the muscles of your face: frown; squint your eyes; purse your lips. Press your tongue against the roof of your mouth and hunch your shoulders. Feel the tension as I count to five. Now relax and let the tension go. Feel the difference in your face. Really smooth out the muscles. (Relax for 30 seconds and repeat.)

3. Arch your back as you take a deep breath into your chest. Hold for 5 seconds. Relax and let the tension go. (30 seconds.) Take a deep breath and press out your stomach. Hold and feel the tension. Feel the difference in your body. (Relax for 30 seconds and repeat procedure.)

4. Pull your feet and toes back toward your face, tightening your shins. (Hold for 5 seconds then relax for 30 seconds.) Curl your toes as you tighten your calves, thighs and buttocks. Feel calm and rested as you let the tension go. (Relax for 30 seconds and repeat.)

At the end, allow an extra minute of relaxation as you encourage parents to feel calm and rested. Speak in a soft voice and say "Let go

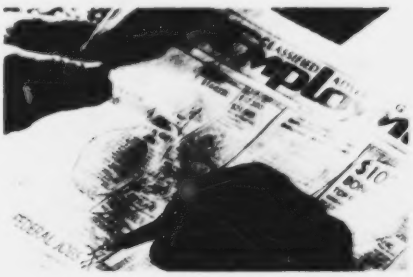
more and more; relax even more." Aim for complete relaxation of all the muscles. Then invite parents to slowly open their eyes. Ask for their comments or questions about the procedure. Encourage parents to use this technique during the coming week. Explain that relaxation comes more quickly and more completely with regular practice.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session One using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved. Suggest to parents that, before the next session, they try out some of the new skills they learned today: stretching, muscle relaxing, finding time to do something they want to do and planning a daily schedule. At the beginning of the next session they will have an opportunity to share what they did with the group.

Session 2



Moving Along

Goals

To try out and learn about aerobic exercise.

To look at your attitudes and feelings about money.

To identify problems about money and possible solutions.

To learn some breathing techniques that help you relax.

Agenda

On the Go

A Penny for Your Thoughts

Problems and Possibilities

Taking a Breather

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic Exercise

What Aerobic Exercise Is

- rhythmic – it has a steady beat
- repetitive – you do the same thing over and over again
- continuous – you can keep going for two minutes or more without huffing and puffing

What Aerobic Exercise Does

- strengthens your heart, lowers your blood pressure, and reduces your chance of having a heart attack or stroke
- tones you muscles and blood vessels
- gives you more energy
- helps you sleep better
- burns up fat and helps you lose weight
- releases stressful feelings such as anger and irritability
- improves your mood and fights depression

Guidelines For Aerobic Exercise

- exercise for at least 20 minutes three days a week or more
- begin with a slow warm-up period and end with a slow cool-down period
- take it slowly — do not exercise too hard too soon — increase your pace gradually
- exercise at a pace at which you can carry on a conversation; if you can't talk easily, slow down
- look for improvement in about four weeks

Kinds of Aerobic Exercise

- walking
- jogging
- running
- dancing
- swimming
- jumping or skipping rope

Can you think of other ways to keep moving rhythmically, repetitively, continuously for 20 minutes?

Session 2: Moving Along

Parents will begin this session by playing a game that introduces the basic elements of aerobic exercise. Next, they will engage in some activities designed to trigger their thoughts about money. Then they will brainstorm lists of problems associated with money as well as possible solutions. Finally, they will learn some breathing techniques for improving health and promoting relaxation.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

Although caring for a family keeps parents on the go, many do not get the kind of rhythmic, repetitive, and continuous exercise that is important to both physical and mental health. Aerobic exercise, such as walking, jogging, dancing, and jumping rope, provides a wide range of health benefits if it is practiced for at least 20 minutes a day, three or more days a week. Making aerobic exercise a part of life is one of

the best things you can do to improve health, reduce stress, and feel better every day.

Our attitudes and feelings about money are influenced by the many, and often conflicting, messages that come from society, including family, church, government, the media, and advertisements. By recognizing how these messages affect our views of money, we can begin to think more clearly about money and its place in our lives.

People experience a wide range of problems associated with money, from earning, spending and saving to sharing, learning and talking about money. Identifying money problems and thinking of approaches to solving them are important beginning steps in learning to manage money. Taking these steps gives people the confidence they need to seek information and find ways to learn the skills of money management.

Although breathing is something we do automatically, it is possible to improve the way we breathe. Full, deep relaxed breathing brings more oxygen into our lungs and removes more waste

products from our blood. This makes our bodies work better and improves our mental health, too. And deep breathing is an easy way to help ourselves relax.

GOALS OF SESSION 2

To try out and learn about aerobic exercise.

To look at your attitudes and feelings about money.

To identify problems about money and possible solutions.

To learn some breathing techniques that help you relax.

AGENDA

On the Go

A Penny for Your Thoughts

Problems and Possibilities

Taking a Breather

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session

Information sheets #1 and #2

Clock or watch

Marking pens in a variety of colors

Planning Ahead

Begin preparing for this session by reading the session plan and information sheets carefully. Next, try out the game, Punchinello, Aerobic-Style, with some friends or co-workers. Practice until your instructions are clear and your timing is correct. Also practice leading someone through the breathing techniques. You might practice them yourself at home, too, so you can tell parents if they helped you to relax.

Getting Started

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity to reacquaint parents with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Then ask if any parents tried to fit something they wanted to do in their daily routine during the past week? What happened? Did anyone try stretching? Muscle relaxation? Planning a schedule? What problems did they have? Were their efforts worth it? Would they try again? After parents have shared

their experiences, discuss the goals and agenda for this session using the large chart you prepared, as well as information sheet #1.

On the Go

(Approximately 35 minutes)

Purposes: To try out aerobic exercise.

To learn the principle elements and purposes of aerobic exercise.

To think about the value of aerobic exercise and how to make time for it.

Explain to parents that they will begin this session with a game called Punchinello, Aerobic-Style. Ask if anyone remembers playing Punchinello as a child. If so, ask if he or she could explain it to the group. If no one is able to explain, give the following directions:

All form a circle with one person in the middle who is called Punchinello. All except Punchinello sing:

2. What can you do, Punchinello, funny fellow.
What can you do, Punchinello, funny do?

As the group sings, Punchinello does something like clapping his hands, hopping or swinging his arms.

3. We'll do it too, Punchinello, funny fellow.
   We'll do it too, Punchinello funny do.

All those around the circle imitate him as he sings.

4. Who do you choose, Punchinello, funny fellow.
   Who do you choose, Punchinello, funny do?

As the group sings, Punchinello closes his or her eyes and turns in a circle with one hand pointing out. When the song ends, Punchinello stops and whomever he is pointing to becomes the new Punchinello while the old one goes back to the circle.

The game continues with participants taking turns as Punchinello.

To play Punchinello, Aerobic-Style, follow the directions for the children's game plus the following:

1. Move from foot to foot as you sing and while you are imitating Punchinello. Remember to keep moving.

2. If you get tired, don't imitate Punchinello. Just move from foot to foot and sing.

3. If you're out of breath and can't sing, stop moving altogether. When you get your breath again, sing. When you feel you can start moving from foot to foot again, do that while you sing.

4. Levels of participation are as follows: a) stand, b) stand and sing, c) move from foot to foot and sing, d) move from foot to foot, sing, and imitate Punchinello.

5. Play the game for 15-20 minutes.

Invite parents to play Punchinello, Aerobic-Style and tell them that you'll talk more about aerobics later. As you play the game, encourage parents to keep moving if they can, but not overdo it if they're uncomfortable. While this game is designed to introduce the principles of aerobic exercise, it's also an opportunity for parents to have fun together. So lighten up, loosen up, and have a good time.

When you have played the game for 20 minutes, invite everyone to walk slowly around the room for two minutes and then sit down. Compliment them on their willingness to try out the game. Then ask for their first reactions to the game. Do they feel tired? Energetic? Relaxed? In a good mood? Ready for more?

Next, explain that the game they just played is considered to be an aerobic exercise because it is a rhythmic, repetitive, energetic activity

which can be continued for more than two minutes without getting out of breath. Then say that information sheet #2 will give more information about aerobic exercise.

Distribute information sheet #2 and read it aloud. Encourage parents to answer the last question on the sheet by giving as many ideas as possible. Explain that you do not need special clothes, records or tapes to do aerobic exercise. You do not need to be slim, shapely or energetic to begin aerobics either. You just need to keep moving for 20 minutes.

Briefly review the Punchinello, Aerobic-Style game the group played, pointing out the ways in which it followed the guidelines for aerobic exercise:

> It began with a slow period of moving from foot to foot and singing.
>
> You moved at a pace comfortable for you.
>
> You slowed down if you could not sing as you moved.
>
> You ended with a period of slow walking.

Wrap up this activity by asking parents to think about when they could fit aerobic exercise into their schedule in the coming week. Ask them if they have any ideas on how to find time to do aerobics.

A Penny for Your Thoughts

(Approximately 50 minutes)

Purpose: To explore your attitudes and feelings about money.

Begin this activity by asking parents to raise their hands if they agree with the following statements about money as they are read. Pause between statements but move along quickly.

The love of money is the root of all evil.

The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

Money can't buy love.

A good reputation is more valuable than money.

Money is power.

A penny saved is a penny earned.

Diamonds are a girl's best friend.

Time is money.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to heaven.

A fool and his money are soon parted.

Save for a rainy day.

Money burns a hole in your pocket.

Comment that these well-known statements express a few of the many different ideas people have about money.

Next, give parents a blank piece of paper and ask them to complete this sentence: "When I think of money, I think of ..." Encourage them to quickly jot down whatever comes to mind. They will not have to tell others what they have written unless they wish to. They should write as many ideas as possible.

When the parents have finished writing, ask them to look over what they have written. Ask if they were surprised by what came to mind when they thought of money. Did they write more about things or feelings? How to get money or how to spend it? Lead a discussion about where we get

our ideas about money using the following questions?

> What ideas about money do we get from TV shows such as Dynasty and Dallas? How about from Good Times, Archie's Place, The Jefferson's, The Waltons, or What's Happening?
>
> What messages about money do we get from advertisements? From credit companies? From banks? From churches?

Comment that money is defined in the dictionary both as a medium of exchange, that is, coins and bills which can be traded for goods and services, and as a measure of value, that is, how much something is worth. Ask parents if they believe that people as well as things can be measured in terms of money. Is it common to rate others according to how much money they have? Do others rate you that way? How does this influence <u>your</u> attitude toward money?

Draw the discussion to a close by commenting on the wide range of messages we get about money from those around us. With so many conflicting ideas to deal with, individuals have a hard time developing realistic and sensible attitudes toward money. (Remember that the purpose of this

activity is to explore attitudes; there is no need to push for conclusions or to reach an agreement.)

Problems and Possibilities

(Approximately 45 minutes)

Purposes: To identify common problems associated with money.

To think of possible ways to approach problems associated with money.

Explain to parents that in this activity they will brainstorm a list of common problems people have concerning money and then come up with a list of ways in which people can go about finding solutions for money problems.

Begin by taking out a large piece of chart paper and displaying it where all can see it. Write at the top, "Problems About Money." Review the rules of brainstorming, then ask parents to name some common problems about money. Encourage a wide range of ideas in such areas as earning, spending, saving, budgeting, sharing, learning, talking and teaching about money. Remember to write down parents' ideas in their own words. When the list is complete, read it over and ask

parents if they can group similar ideas together. Use a colored marking pen to check or circle ideas that go together.

Next, write "Possible Solutions" at the top of a new sheet of chart paper. Identify one group of problems from the first list, such as those having to do with earning enough money, and ask parents for their ideas on how to go about solving the problems. Their ideas might include such things as finishing school, getting job training or career counseling, selling things they make, or baby-sitting for others.

Write down their ideas with the same colored marker you used to group the problems together. When parents have finished offering approaches for solving one group of problems, move on to the next group, writing down their ideas with the appropriately colored marker. Continue with each group, if time permits, complimenting parents on the wealth of their ideas as you go along.

Bring the activity to a close by complimenting parents on their ability to identify

problems and come up with ways to go about solving them. Knowing what your problems are and thinking of some approaches to solving them are the first steps in managing money. These activities pave the way for seeking more information and learning the skills of money management.

Taking a Breather

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Purpose: To learn some breathing techniques as a means of improving health, reducing stress, and relaxing.

Explain to parents that, although breathing is something we do automatically, it is possible to improve the way we breathe. Full, deep, relaxed breathing brings more oxygen into our lungs and removes more waste products from our blood. This makes our bodies work better and improves our mental health, too. Best of all, deep breathing is a method of relaxing that we can use anywhere.

Begin by asking parents to close their eyes and sit with their legs uncrossed and feet flat on

the floor. Advise them to notice how they are breathing. Is the air going in and out of their nose or mouth or both? Does their abdomen move or their chest or both? Are they taking short or long breaths? They do not need to answer your questions aloud, just notice what you are calling to their attention. When parents have had a few quiet moments to observe their breathing, ask them to do the following exercises which are adapted from The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook by Davis, Eschelman, and McKay. Use a quiet, soothing, relaxed tone of voice as you give the instructions.

1. Sit with your spine straight. Relax and let go of all tension in your body. Look for tense spots and relax them. Place one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose into your abdomen to push up your hand as much as feels comfortable. Your chest should move only a little and only with your abdomen.

2. Smile slightly. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth, making a quiet, relaxing whooshing sound like the wind as you blow gently out. Relax your mouth, tongue, and jaw. Take long, slow, deep breaths which raise and lower your abdomen. Pay attention to the sound and feeling of breathing as you become more and more relaxed.

3. Now we are going to try the relaxing sigh. A sigh releases a bit of tension. Sit up straight. Sigh deeply, letting out a

sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs. (Demonstrate, making sure your sigh can be heard.) Don't think about inhaling -- just let the air come in naturally. And be sure to let the sound of the sigh come out. (Repeat about 10 times, encouraging parents to relax and let go of their tension each time.)

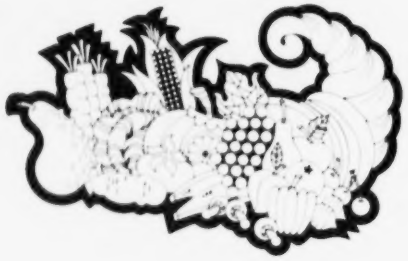
At the end, allow parents an extra minute of quiet relaxation. Then invite parents to slowly open their eyes. Ask for their comments or questions about the breathing techniques.

Encourage parents to practice these techniques at home for five or ten minutes at a time, once or twice a day, and whenever they feel themselves getting tense.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session Two using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved.



Session 3

Growing Strong

Goals

To think about the need to strengthen your muscles and to try out some muscle strengthening exercises.

To think about what food means to you and to look at your eating habits.

To consider the advice of some health experts on what to eat in order to live longer.

To think about what inner strength means and to practice meditation as a way to develop it.

Agenda

Flex Your Muscles

Food Is. . .

When, Where, and What I Eat

Finding Inner Strength

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Eating to Live

Eating to Live

Today, experts in health and nutrition are advising Americans to change the way they eat in order to avoid cancer and heart disease and to live longer. Here is their advice for a long life:

- Eat fewer saturated fats which are mainly in high-fat animal and dairy products.
- Eat more food high in fiber and complex carbohydrates: whole grain breads, cereals and pasta; nuts, dried beans and peas; fruits and vegetables.
- Eat foods rich in vitamins A and C every day. (For vitamin A, choose dark green and deep yellow fresh fruits and vegetables such as carrots, spinach, yams, peaches and apricots. For vitamin C, eat oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, and green and red peppers.)
- Eat cruciferous vegetables — cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, kohlrabi and cauliflower — several times a week.
- Cut down on salt-cured, smoked, and nitrate-cured foods such as ham, corned beef, hot dogs, sausages, salami, and bologna.
- Drink alcohol moderately or not at all.
- Cut down on drinks and foods containing caffeine — coffee, tea, colas, and chocolate.
- Eat less sugar and salt.
- Avoid being overweight or underweight.
- Don't smoke or chew tobacco.

Changing your diet isn't easy. Take a few steps at a time by gradually eating more of the foods in the "Eat More" list and fewer of the foods in the "Eat Less" list on the right.

Eat More

- fruits
- vegetables
- whole grain
- cereal
- pasta
- tortillas
- dried beans
- peas
- nuts
- low-fat milk
- low fat dairy products
- liquid vegetable oils
- fish
- chicken
- turkey
- veal

Eat Less

- store-bought cakes, pies, cookies, mixes.
- potato-chips and other deep fried snacks
- butter, lard, salt pork, solid shortening
- whole milk, cream, ice cream, non-dairy creamer
- duck, goose, beef, pork, ham, lamb, and organ meats
- egg yolks
- salt
- sugar

Session 3: Growing Strong

Parents will begin this last session of LOOKING AT LIFE DAY BY DAY by measuring their physical strength and trying some muscle-strengthening exercises. Then they will complete the sentence, "Food is ...," and discuss how our attitudes and feelings about food develop as we grow up. Next, they will take a look at their own eating habits and consider the advice of health experts on what to eat. Finally, they will discuss what inner strength means to them and try an approach to meditation.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

Muscular strength is an important part of physical fitness. Strong muscles protect our skeleton, prevent injuries, improve our appearance, and help us to do work. Exercises for strengthening muscles should be done in conjunction with stretching exercises; they balance each other. Neither kind of exercise

strengthens heart and blood vessels, however. Only aerobic exercise does that. That is why it is the most important kind to do.

Food is never just something to eat. From infancy onward, we develop attitudes and feelings about food that affect our view of it even as adults. For most people, food provides both physical and emotional satisfaction. It often conveys messages of love and caring and sometimes becomes a battleground of rewards, punishment, and rebellion. We get many messages about food from our family, culture, and even advertisements. Looking at how these messages influence our own attitudes and feelings about food helps us to see food more clearly. It also can be informative, and even surprising, to take a close look at our eating habits. When, where and what we eat are important to our health and to the feelings of satisfaction we get from food.

Today, much attention is being paid to nutrition as doctors and researchers are discovering links between diet and health problems, such as cancer and heart disease. The

American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the National Academy of Sciences, and other groups of experts regularly publish their recommendations on what to eat in order to live long and healthy lives. Although changing our diet is not easy, it is helpful to begin gradually eating more of the recommended foods and fewer of the others. Adjusting to a new diet might be easier if we try to increase the satisfaction we get from how we eat -- with whom, in what surroundings, and at what speed. A relaxed meal with good company and flowers on the table can often compensate for the absence of our favorite food.

While exercise, relaxation, and good nutrition help us to handle the stresses of everyday life, some people claim that it is inner strength which helps us to cope with problems throughout life. For some people, inner strength is developed through religion; others have a personal philosophy of life which guides them. Inner strength might also be developed by looking inward to find yourself. Meditation is a way of

slowing down and clearing the path for an inward journey.

As parents complete LOOKING AT LIFE DAY BY DAY, they will benefit from reviewing what they have accomplished as individuals and as a group. Receiving certificates and celebrating the completion of the program are important elements in achieving the program goals.

GOALS OF SESSION 3

To think about the need to strengthen your muscles and to try out some muscle-strengthening exercises.

To think about what food means to you and to look at your eating habits.

To consider the advice of some health experts on what to eat in order to live longer.

To think about what inner strength means and to practice meditation as a way to develop it.

AGENDA

Flex Your Muscles

Food Is...

When, Where, and What I Eat

Finding Inner Strength

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session.

Information sheets #1 and #2.

Paper and pencils for parents.

Empty aluminum soda cans, one for each parent.

Planning Ahead

Begin preparations for this session by reading the session plan and information sheets carefully. Next, try out the exercises and practice leading someone through them. Do the same for the meditation. Also, plan how you will award the certificates and serve refreshments.

Getting Started

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity. Next, ask if any parents tried aerobics or the breathing exercises during the past week. Ask them to share their experiences with the group. Then discuss the goals and agenda for this session using the large chart you prepared as well as information sheet #1.

Flex Your Muscles

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To consider the value of strengthening your muscles.

To try out some muscle-strengthening exercises.

Explain to parents that this activity begins with a poll or survey designed to find out how many of them could use stronger muscles. Ask the parents to raise their hands if they have had the experience or feeling you describe. (This is basically a warm-up activity designed to interest parents in strengthening their muscles.) Read the following questions, pausing after each one to allow parents to raise their hands.

How many of you have ever had trouble carrying a suitcase when you went on a trip?

How many of you have ever had a hard time carrying a grocery bag home from the store?

How many of you sometimes have trouble opening a jar?

How many of you would like a flatter stomach?

How many of you would like to get rid of a little flab somewhere?

How many of you were discouraged from developing muscles when you were growing up?

Tell parents that if they answered yes to any of these questions, they might be interested in learning how to strengthen their muscles.

To give parents a rough idea of their present strength, give each one an aluminum soda can and ask them to crush it with one hand. If they can't do it easily, they are lacking in grip strength which is a good indication of their general body strength. If anyone passes the aluminum can test, he or she might want to try the push-up test:

> Lie on the floor on your stomach with your palms on the floor at shoulder level, elbows pointing up in the air. Keeping your body straight, push yourself up with your arms until your body weight is resting only on your hands and toes.

If anyone can do one or more push-ups, congratulate them. Although the YMCA Physical Fitness Handbook suggests that women should be able to do four to six push-ups and men should be able to do eight to ten, most women and many men can't even do one, according to Kathryn Lance, author of Getting Strong. To increase your strength, Lance recommends doing calisthenics, such as push-ups, pull-ups and sit-ups, and weight-lifting.

Explain to parents that today they will have a chance to try out a few simple calisthenics and weight-lifting exercises. If they are interested in starting a muscle-strengthening program (and most people should be) they should read up on the subject or get the advice of an exercise instructor. Learning the basics requires more time than this activity allows. Parents with the following health conditions should get the advice of their doctor before beginning a muscle-strengthening program: heart disease, hernia, high blood pressure, infection, fever, pregnancy, or recent surgery. Tell parents that these warnings should not discourage them from beginning a muscle-strengthening exercise program. Strong muscles actually lessen your chances of injuring yourself since they can do more work and hold your body in proper position.

Now lead parents through the following exercises which are adapted from Getting Strong.

1. Arm Flings. Stand with your feet comfortably apart and stretch your arms out at shoulder level. Bend your elbows until your fingers touch in front of your chest. First fling your bent elbows as far back as possible. (Try to make them meet in the back.) Return to starting

position. Now straighten your arms and fling them as far back as possible, keeping them parallel to the floor. Repeat 10 times, alternately flinging bent and straight arms.

2. Side Arm Lifts. Stand with your feet comfortably apart and your hands at your sides. Keeping your arms straight, bring them slowly out at the sides and up until your hands are over your head. Slowly lower your arms to starting position. Repeat eight times. (Tell parents that the goal of this exercise is to lift your arms while holding weights. When they can do 20 repetitions of this exercise comfortably at home, they might try it holding soup cans.)

3. Wall Push-up. Stand facing a wall, one or two feet from it, with your arms straight out in front of you and your hands supporting you as you lean into the wall. Slowly lower your body to the wall then push it back out. Repeat eight times. (This is similar to the calf-stretching exercise, but the emphasis is on pushing the weight of your body away from the wall as you straighten your elbows.)

Compliment parents on their willingness to try these exercises. Explain that now they have tried out the three basic kinds of exercises -- stretching, aerobics, and muscle-strengthening exercise. Each has an important purpose and each contributes to your overall fitness and health. However, if parents have time for only one kind of exercise, they should do aerobics because it makes

the biggest difference by far in how healthy they are and how long they live.

Food Is...

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To think about what food means to you.

To look at all the things people associate with food.

Explain to parents that this activity focuses on food and its importance in our lives. Begin by giving everyone a blank sheet of paper and asking them to finish the sentence "Food is ..." Tell them to jot down whatever comes to mind when they think of food; they do not have to write a definition of food. Encourage them to write down as many ideas as possible. They shouldn't criticize or skip over their thoughts -- just jot them down. They will not have to tell what they've written unless they wish to.

When the parents have stopped writing, ask them to look over what they wrote. Were they surprised by what they wrote? What kinds of things came to mind when they thought of food?

Things to eat? Problems with food? Their bodies? Being with other people? Holidays or parties? Feelings of comfort, satisfaction, or love? Preparing food?

After parents have discussed what they associate with food, lead a discussion of how we develop feelings and attitudes toward food as we grow up.

What does food mean to a hungry infant who can't seem to wait? When a mother cuddles and sings to her baby as she feeds him, what feelings does he associate with food?

How does a toddler act at mealtime? When a toddler is not very hungry and is told to eat, what is he likely to do and feel?

When children are rewarded with sweets for good behavior or punished with "no dessert" for bad behavior, what ideas do they get about food?

When teenagers choose junk food over the lunch that mom sent to school, what are they doing besides satisfying their hunger?

When a mother makes chicken soup for a sick child or chocolate chip cookies for a good one, what messages is she sending them?

When ads on TV show thin people eating fattening food, what messages are they sending?

Is food ever just something to eat?

Bring the discussion to a close by commenting that it is impossible for most of us to think of food apart from all the feelings we associate with it. But looking at those feelings can help us to understand a little better what food means to each of us.

When, Where and What I Eat

(Approximately 50 minutes)

Purposes: To look at your eating habits.

To consider the advice of some health experts on what to eat in order to live longer.

Explain to parents that in this activity, they will take a look at their eating habits. Often people eat without really noticing how or what they're eating. By taking a look at when, where, and what you eat, you can get the information you need to decide if you are satisfied with the way you eat.

Give everyone a blank sheet of paper and ask them to fold it into three columns. Demonstrate what to do using your own sheet of paper and write

"when" at the top of the first column, "where" at the top of the second column, and "what" at the top of the third column. Ask the parents to begin by thinking of all the times they usually eat on a typical day beginning with breakfast and ending with the last bite they take before bed. They might want to look back on when they ate yesterday. They should include snacks as well as meals. To indicate "when", they could write a time, such as 10:30 a.m., or write "mid-morning." Remind parents that they do not have to share anything they write on this paper, unless they wish to.

Tell parents that when they finish the first column, they should move on to the second one and write down all the places where they normally eat, such as kitchen, bedroom, car, playground, and so forth. Finally, they should write in the last column the things they eat and drink regularly. They should begin with those things they eat or drink several times a day, then list those they eat every day, and finally, put down those things they eat every week. The purpose is to look at

what foods and drinks make up the greatest part of their diet.

When everyone has finished writing, ask them to look over their lists. Then lead a brief discussion using the following questions:

> Which list was hardest to write? Why? Did writing the lists give you more information about your eating habits than you had before? For instance, did you eat in more places than you realized?
>
> Which list gave you the most new or surprising information?
>
> As you look over your lists, are you satisfied with your eating habits? Is there anything you'd like to do differently?

When parents have had a chance to share their ideas, comment that when, where, and what you eat are important to your health and to the feeling of satisfaction you get from food. Then comment that more and more attention is being paid to nutrition as doctors and researchers are discovering links between food and health problems such as cancer and heart disease. Information sheet #2 provides a summary of the latest advice on nutrition from the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, the National Academy of Sciences and other experts.

Distribute information sheet #2 and read it aloud. When you have finished, ask parents for their comments and questions. If you cannot answer some questions about nutrition, tell them where you think they might find the answers. Then lead a discussion using the following questions:

> Would it be hard for you to follow the advice on the information sheet? What would be hardest?
>
> Are you already eating some of the things suggested? Are some of the things on the list you just wrote?
>
> If you ate mostly from the recommended food list, do you think you would gain weight? Might you lose any weight?

Comment to parents that information sheet #2 focused on <u>what</u> to eat. Changing what we eat might mean we get less satisfaction from our meals, at least until we get used to the new diet. However, some of the satisfaction we get from food comes from <u>how</u> we eat -- with whom, in what surroundings, and at what speed. Ask parents for their ideas on making <u>how</u> they eat pleasant and satisfying. When they have offered their ideas, thank them and suggest that they try out some of the ideas they heard today.

Finding Inner Strength

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To think about what inner strength means to you.

To practice meditation as a way to develop inner strength.

Comment to parents that in this session, we have looked at ways to develop physical strength and health through exercise and good nutrition. Physical health and strength enable us to cope better with the everyday stresses of life and to deal with major problems when they occur. However, many people who have suffered hardship or tragedy say that it was an inner strength which helped them to survive. Lead a brief discussion by asking the following questions:

What does inner strength mean to you?

Where does inner strength come from? Can we nourish it and exercise it?

Where can we find support in developing inner strength?

When parents have shared their ideas, tell them that they will now practice taking a few moments for meditation or reflection. Comment that for centuries people of all cultures have tried to find inner peace this way. Meditation

has been associated with religious doctrines and philosophical disciplines, but it can also be practiced purely as a means of reducing inner turmoil and increasing self-knowledge.

Explain to parents that meditation requires: 1) a quiet place; 2) a comfortable position; 3) something to focus on; and 4) a passive attitude. The last, a passive attitude, is most important. It means noticing thoughts and distractions as they come up and letting them go as you return to what you are focusing on.

Now lead parents slowly through the following meditation which is adapted from The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook by Davis, Eshelman and McKay.

> Sit with your arms and legs resting gently in a relaxed way.
>
> Look over your body to find any tension and relax. Close your eyes.
>
> Breathe through your nose. Inhale, exhale, and pause. Breathe in an easy, natural way. Become aware of your breathing.
>
> As you exhale, say silently to yourself, "one." Continue to breathe in and out, saying "one" each time you exhale.

When thoughts or distractions take your attention away from your breathing, let go of them quickly and return to saying "one." (Do this for five to ten minutes.)

Now, keep your eyes closed as you stop meditating. Pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, body, and things around you for a few minutes. Now open your eyes and continue noticing things in and outside yourself for a few minutes.

When parents have finished the meditation, ask for their comments or questions. What was it like meditating? How do they feel now? How do they think meditation would affect them if they did it regularly?

Bring the activity to a close by thanking parents for their willingness to try meditation.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 30 minutes)

At this point you should take a few moments to review with parents what they have done in LOOKING AT LIFE DAY BY DAY. You could use the goals and agenda for each session as guides. Then ask parents for their comments on the program and on their experience as part of the group. When everyone who wishes to comment or just say good-bye has had a chance to do so, thank parents

for their unique contributions to the group and award each one a certificate of completion of the program. This can be done in the way you think is most appropriate for your group. Then it's time to celebrate and enjoy the refreshments you have prepared.

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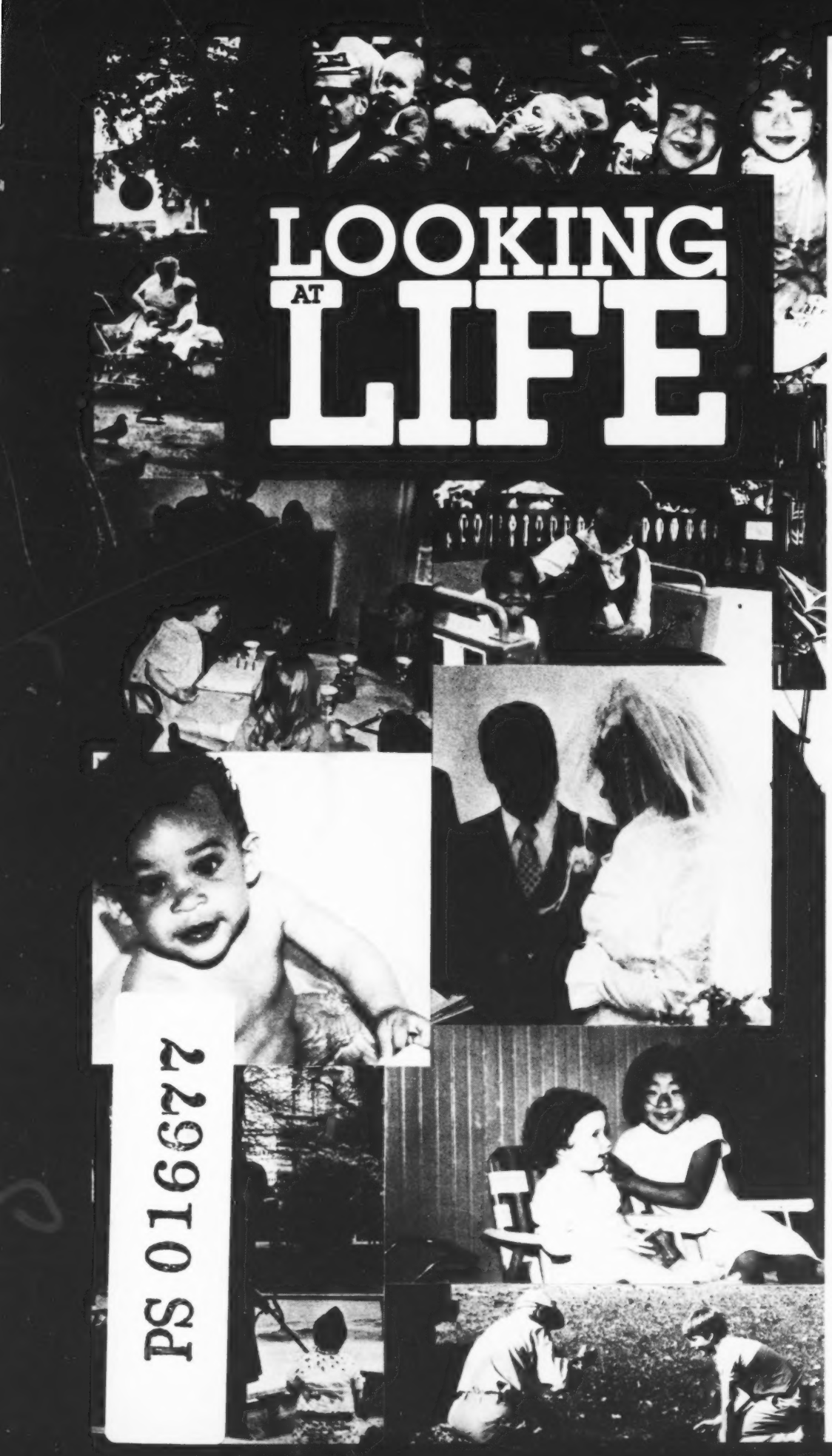

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With Our Children

In **Looking at Life With Our Children,** parents explore children's play from many angles. They play themselves, think about what play offers children, and consider how adults can support children's play. By examining play, they become aware of their own knowledge of child development, then consider an expert's view and discuss ways to manage children's behavior at different ages. Television, the thief of play-time, becomes the object of discussion as parents try out alternative activities for children. Finally, parents focus on their own relationship with their children and the ways they can support their children's education.

OK, Let's Play

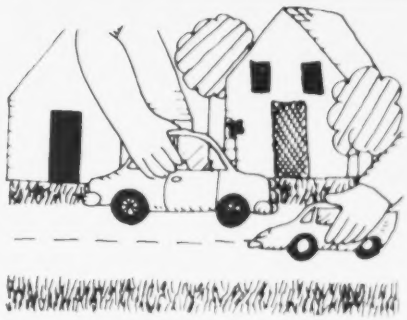
- Trying Out a Child's World
- Child's Play
- Building a Toy Village
- Chances for Children

All in the Game

- Games People Play
- Playing at Different Ages
- One View of Development
- Rules of the Game

Time Out!

- Looking at TV
- What's There to Do?
- Just the Two of Us
- You're Number One



Session 1

OK – Let's Play

Goals

To think about the way children view the world by taking their physical point of view.

To look at the many ways children play.

To play as children do and to think about how to support children's play.

To look at the opportunities for development which play offers children.

Agenda

Trying Out a Child's World

Child's Play

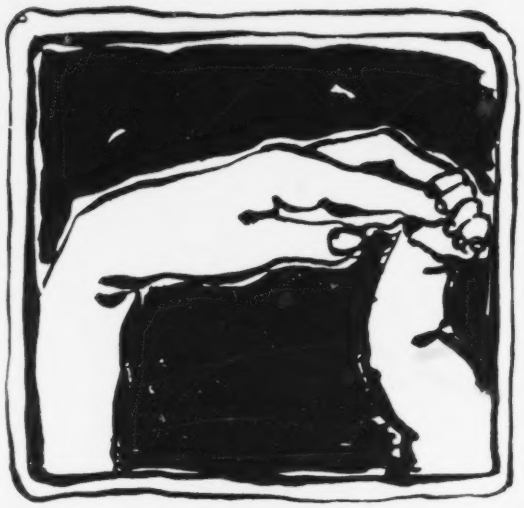
Building a Toy Village

Chances for Children

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Trying Out a Child's World
Brainstorming
Building a Toy Village

Trying Out a Child's World



In working with young children you can become aware of the differences between their world and yours. Although you cannot actually go back to the world of childhood, there are ways in which you can appreciate and understand some of the differences between childhood and adulthood. "Trying Out a Child's World" suggests several of these ways.

If you were the child in any one of these illustrations, how might you feel? How might your actions be changed if this were the way the world appeared to you?

"Taking children on a walk was always an amazing experience for me. They'd get totally caught up in the pattern of an iron grate or the distortions of their face reflected in the side of a car — things I never even notice because they hit me at about knee level."

—A teacher

Child-Size

Sitting on the floor makes an adult just about the height of a two- or three-year-old child. Try sitting on the floor and look around you at the young child's view of things. What does this experience add to your understanding of how the world appears to small children? Does it suggest to you any ways in which you might arrange things at home so that children are more comfortable? Any ways in which older people should behave with children?

Brainstorming

Often people don't share their ideas with others for fear of being criticized. Brainstorming is a way for everyone to feel comfortable about sharing ideas, because no one is allowed to criticize them. The purpose of brainstorming is to hear every idea: one suggestion triggers another, and in this way good ideas are discovered.

In brainstorming it is very important to follow these four rules:

- **List every idea**, no matter how far out it seems to be. *(One person should be responsible for making the list.)*
- **Don't judge** whether ideas are good or bad, just call them out.
- There should be **no discussion** or comments until after the list is complete.
- **It's all right** to repeat an idea or to add to one already listed.

Building a Toy Village

People involved:

Don, a student

Jimmy, Sara, Arthur, Doreen — three- and four-year-old children

One day Don decided to plan a project for the children he was working with.

They might like to build a toy village, he thought.

The next day he brought colored paper, paste, scissors and cardboard to the fieldsite.

He covered a table with brown paper. Then he drew the main streets with a crayon.

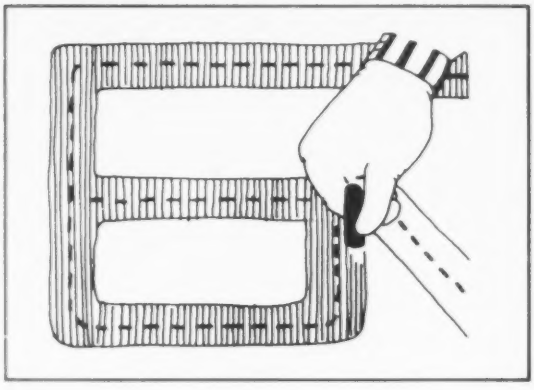
He called Jimmy, Sara, Arthur, and Doreen over.

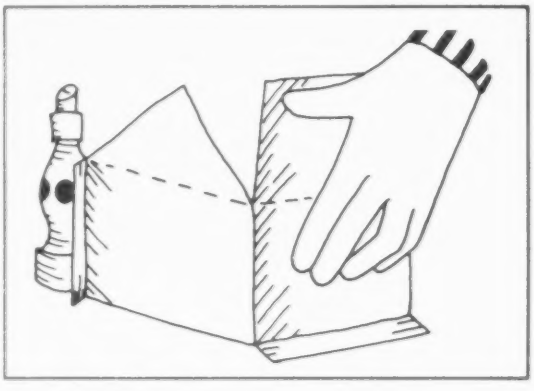
Don drew houses on the colored paper.

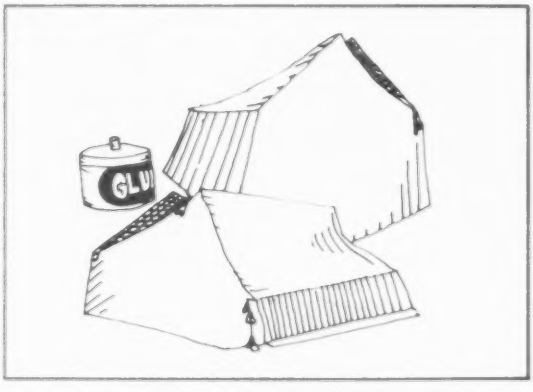
Then he asked the children to cut them out, fold the corners, and paste them together.

Some of the children couldn't cut well. The houses cut out by Doreen and Arthur looked like this:

So Don cut out and pasted their houses.







Then the children painted their houses and put them on the table.

Sara and Jimmy brought some toy cars, and the village looked fine!

Don left the children playing with the village.

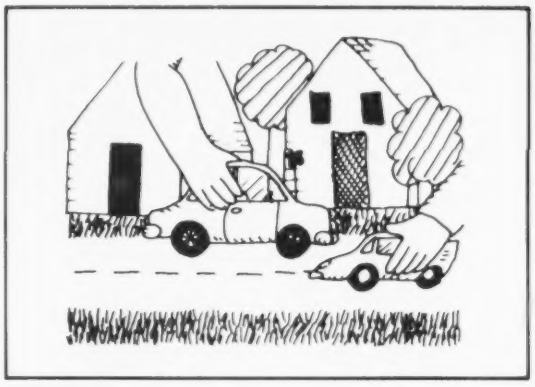
Five minutes later he heard a lot of noise.

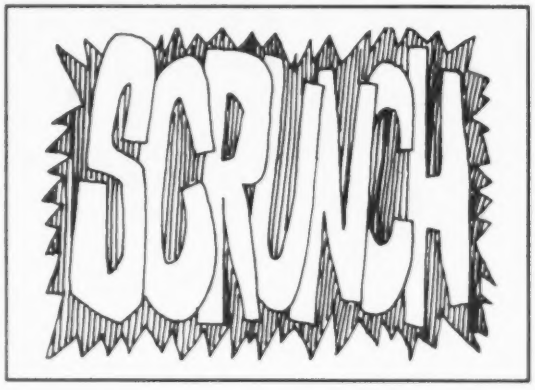
He went back to the village and found. . .

A MESS! The children had flattened the houses by driving the cars all over them.

"Why did you wreck the village?" Don asked.

Jimmy said, "It was fun!"





WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Why did Don take over the cutting and pasting?
2. What effect did this have on the children and on the project?
3. Was the project a success or a failure? From Don's viewpoint? From the children's?

Session 1: OK, Let's Play

In this first session of LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN, parents will put themselves in their child's shoes in order to understand the importance of play. They will begin by looking at the world from the child's physical point of view. After thinking about the many ways children play, they will form small groups to play as children do, building a toy village. Based on this experience, they will discuss how adults can support children's play and what opportunities for development play offers children.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

It is difficult for adults to remember what it was like to be a young child. Consequently, it is hard for them to understand how a child sees the world. Physically, a child is surrounded by near-giants in giant-sized places.

This sense of being small affects the way a child feels and reacts. Likewise, the things that interest and occupy a child are often a mystery to adults. It requires an effort on the adult's part to experience the child's playthings as he or she does. However, if an adult puts himself in the child's place and examines his own feelings as he does so, he improves his ability to understand his child's feelings and experiences. Of course this technique of walking in the child's shoes must be combined with careful attention to the child's own messages about how he is feeling, seeing, and understanding things.

For children, play is the business of life; it is their primary occupation. Children are motivated to play by a natural impulse--a push to grow, develop, discover, and learn. Through play, children learn to master materials, their bodies, and relations with others. Play offers children opportunities to relive events in their lives in a way they can control. Through play, children come to learn about the physical and social world they live in.

Adults can support and enrich a child's play in many ways -- playing with the child, supplying materials, answering questions, giving information, keeping others from interrupting, and actively teaching, to name a few. The problem is to know when and how to step into child's play. If adults know the child well and know what they hope the child will gain from play, the solution comes more easily.

GOALS OF SESSION 1

To think about the way children view the world by taking their physical point of view.

To look at the many ways children play.

To play as children do and to think about how to support children's play.

To look at the opportunities for development which play offers children.

AGENDA

Trying Out a Child's World

Child's Play

Building a Toy Village

Chances for Children

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session.

Information sheets #1-5.

Several sheets of large chart paper, felt-tip markers, and tacks or tape.

A selection of the following materials for building a toy village: cardboard boxes in various sizes; large cardboard blocks, wooden blocks, Lego or similar construction sets; stiff paper, paste, tape, scissors, and markers; toy trucks, cards, trains, houses, people, trees, road signs.

Planning Ahead

To prepare for and to lead this session and the ones which follow, it would be wise to ask someone to serve as a co-leader. By sharing the tasks of preparation and by supporting each other during the session, two people can make the job easier.

The first step in planning ahead is to read all the session plans and information sheets in LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN so that you see how the activities and sessions flow. Next, reread Session 1 with particular attention to the purposes and time allotments for each activity. Finally, reread Session 1 with an eye toward how you and your co-leader will share responsibilities in leading the session.

The next step in preparing for this session is collecting the materials you will need for building a toy village. Some suggestions are given in the list of materials on the preceding page, but feel free to choose any which you

think would be good. Decide if you will give each group of parents similar materials or will give each group different ones. For instance, one group might work with Lego blocks, small cars and figures, another with large cardboard cartons, tricycles and dolls, while a third uses wooden blocks and hand-size trucks and cars. Remember to keep each group's objects in scale. Also, have available some art supplies for those who want to design parts of the village from scratch. Ask other staff members for their ideas and try out some of the materials ahead of time to make sure they're suitable.

You must plan how to arrange the room you will be using so that each group has adequate space to work. Also, plan how to arrange or display the materials for each group. Of course, for the discussion and brainstorming activities, you will need to arrange the chairs in a circle.

Plan to provide refreshments at this first session and figure out when and where you will

serve them. For the next two sessions, parents might bring the refreshments themselves.

Getting Started

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity of your choice to acquaint parents with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Give a brief introduction to LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN touching the following points:

- Parents will have an opportunity to look at play from a child's perspective, think about its importance in a child's life, and consider how to encourage it.
- Parents will think about how children's behavior changes as they grow and how parents can influence children's behavior in ways that are appropriate for their ages.
- Parents will explore ways to promote their children's development and prepare them for school.
- Parents will look at themselves as prime educators of their children and partners with teachers in their children's education.

After giving parents an idea of what the whole course will be like, discuss the goals and agenda for the first session using the large

chart you prepared, as well as information sheet #1. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

Trying Out a Child's World

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purpose: To think about the way children view the world by taking their physical point of view.

Distribute information sheet #2 to parents. Read aloud the first and second paragraphs and discuss the illustrations at the right, using the questions in the second paragraph as a guide.

Read the third paragraph and ask if any parents have had similar experiences of amazement at what interests a child.

Now ask parents to sit on the floor to look at things from a child's height. For a more active child's eye view, a few parents might try crawling or walking on their knees. While parents are doing this, the leader can ask them

to consider the following questions:

What can't I see from this level?

What do I see that I normally don't notice?

Where are things which I might be interested in seeing or playing with?

How would I reach those things?

How does it feel to be this size in this room?

How would I change this room to make it more comfortable and exciting?

Next, ask several participants to kneel or sit on the floor while the others, standing up, form a circle around them. Ask those in the center to think about the following questions:

How do I feel about my size?

How do I feel about an adult's size?

Where does my eye-level come on an adult?

How do I get an adult's attention?

What is it like to talk to an adult from a child's level?

Read the last paragraph aloud, pausing after each question to allow a discussion. When the discussion ends, suggest that parents return to their seats. Then, thank parents for their willingness to try out a child's world.

Child's Play

(Approximately 40 minutes)

Purposes: To look at the many ways children play.

To see play as the natural activity of children.

Explain to parents that, in this activity, they will take a look at the major occupation of children--play. Play is what children seem to do most and like to do best. In order to share their ideas about play, parents will learn the techniques of brainstorming. Distribute information sheet #3 which describes the skill of brainstorming. Read the sheet aloud, then repeat the four rules: 1) list every idea; 2) don't judge; 3) don't discuss until the list is complete; 4) repeat or add to ideas, if you wish. It might help to write these rules on chart paper for reference during this session and in the future.

Take a fresh sheet of chart paper, hang it where all can see, and write "Where Children Play" at the top. Ask parents to brainstorm a list of all the places where children play.

When the list is complete, ask parents for their comments. You might comment, if no one else does, that children seem to play everywhere.

Next, take another sheet of chart paper, hang it where all can see it, and write "What Children Play With" at the top. Ask parents to brainstorm a list of people and things with which children play. Because this list could be endless, you might bring the brainstorming to an end when most parents have given their ideas and the pace slows down. When you finish listing ideas, ask parents for their comments. Then lead a brief discussion of the two lists using the following questions:

> Do children need special places to play? Will they find a way to play anywhere?
>
> Are some places better for some kinds of play and some places better for other kinds?
>
> Do children need special toys to play with? What things around the house are good for children to play with?

End the discussion by commenting that children seem to have a natural impulse to play, that they will play with just about anything any anywhere. In fact, if a child doesn't play, we

usually see that as a sign that there is something wrong with him or her.

Building a Toy Village

(Approximately one hour)

Purposes: To see what it is like to play as children do.

To think about how to support children at play.

Explain to parents that in this activity they will play in small groups building a toy village. The idea is to see what goes on when children play together. They need not pretend to be children; they should just be themselves and get involved in the project.

Show parents the materials you have gathered for use in building the village. Give them a few ideas on how the materials might be assembled or combined. If they will be using paint or glue or other art supplies, show them the containers you have prepared. Then show them the spaces where each group will be working. If different groups will be using

different materials or working on different scale (large or small) projects, point that out.

Next, ask parents to form smaller groups. The size of each will depend on what you think will work best. If you plan to have each group use different materials, allow parents to choose the group in which they would like to work. If all groups are to work with similar materials, just form the groups by counting off or some other easy way.

Give the parents about 20 minutes to build the villages. As they work, move around a bit offering whatever assistance or encouragement that you feel is appropriate.

When the time is up, give parents a chance to look at each group's project. Then, bring all the parents back together to discuss what went on. Begin by asking for their first reactions to the experience with questions such as, "How was it?" or "What was it like to build a toy village?" Then lead a discussion using the following questions:

Did you have any problems in deciding how to begin? In working together? In using the materials?

Did anyone else take what you wanted to use? Did you wish you had something that wasn't there?

Did the group leaders say or do anything that helped you as you played or that made you feel good about what you were doing?

What could the group leaders have said or done or not said or done to help you more?

Next, distribute information sheets #4 and #5. Explain that it describes the experience of a college student who worked one day a week at a nursery school. Read the information sheets aloud and then discuss the questions at the end. Ask the parents how Don could have helped the children more. If a parent wanted to set up this activity (building a toy village) at home, what tips would they offer him or her? When parents have shared their views, thank them for their contributions.

Chances for Children

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Purpose: To look at the opportunities for development which play offers children.

Comment to parents that play gives children many chances to do things, to learn things, and even to be things. Ask them to look back on their experience of building a toy village and think about what their children might get out of the same activity. Lead a brief discussion using the following questions:

> What physical skills might children practice?
>
> What might they learn about size and shapes? About gravity? About various building materials?
>
> What opportunities might they have to be in control? To pretend they are people other than themselves? To express their feelings?
>
> What chances would children have to put their thoughts into words? To solve problems? To have an idea and make it real?
>
> Are there any other things children might gain from building a toy village?

When parents have shared their ideas, thank them for their contributions to the discussion. Encourage them to look at their children playing

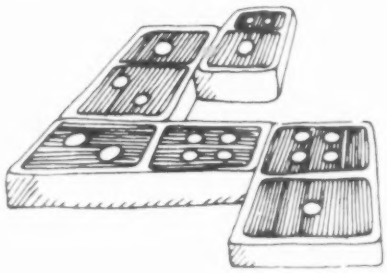
during the coming week and think about what they might be gaining from play.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session One using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved.

Session 2



All in the Game

Goals

To think about the importance of play for people of all ages.

To think about how age makes a difference in the way children play.

To consider one expert's view of development in light of your own exprience with children.

To think about what you can expect of children at different ages and how you manage them so that life goes more smoothly.

Agenda

Games People Play

Playing at Different Ages

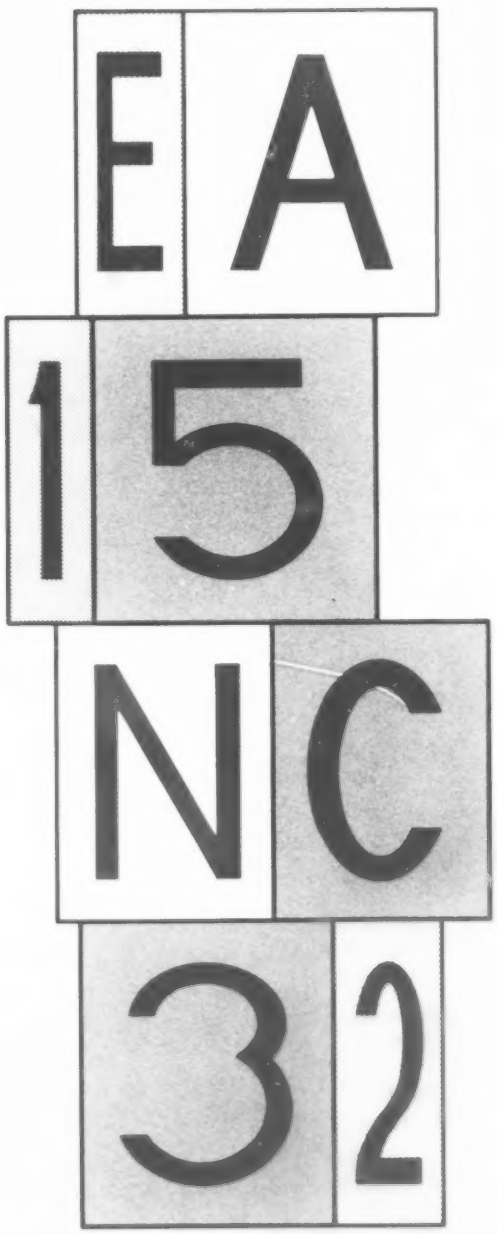
One View of Development

Rules of the Game

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
One View of Development
The Spiral of Development

ONE VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT



In the early part of this century Dr. Arnold Gesell began studying children to find out how they changed from infants to adults. He found that there was a pattern in the way children developed.

All children go through stages, although each child goes at his own speed. How children act depends on their physical growth, especially the growth of their nervous system, that complicated web of nerve fibers, spinal cord, and brain.

As children's nervous systems grow, their minds grow and their behavior changes. We cannot hurry or push a child to act in more grown-up ways. As Gesell and his associates point out, "When the time comes, the child is normally ready for what he may need to do at that time. And he is never ready until his nervous system is ready."

Today, Gesell's followers still find that children go through stages, each with its own distinctive and typical behavior. There are ages in which life seems easy for the child; he or she seems pulled together and on an even keel. These stages of equilibrium alternate with stages of disequilibrium when the child has trouble with all areas of living — eating, sleeping, responding to other people and behaving in an acceptable way. It seems as though developing behavior spirals upward, always advancing, but going from one extreme to the other. The figure on the next information sheet shows these alternations as they occur in the first six years of life.

THE SPIRAL OF DEVELOPMENT

Disequilibrium

Equilibrium

Five Years
- quiet and secure
- wants to be good and usually is
- mother is center of world
- likes the tried and true, not the new and strange

Four and One Half Years
- sometimes acts like a four and sometimes like a five
- insecure
- emotionally changeable

Four Years
- self-confident
- willing to try anything
- wild – goes "out-of-bounds" in all ways
- laughs and cries loudly
- brags, swears, and even lies
- loves to be silly

Three and One Half Years
- insecure
- needs to succeed and have his way
- disobeys
- clumsy – stumbles and falls often
- objects to eating and dressing routine
- at his worst with mother

Three Years
- happy with the world
- likes to obey
- controls body well
- proud of ability to feed and dress self

Two and One Half Years
- goes to extremes
- can't make a choice
- hates change
- bossy, demanding, determined

Two Years
- pleasant
- talks more easily
- controls body well
- can cooperate

Eighteen Months
- difficult
- impatient
- can't talk so he crys and has tantrums when you don't understand
- can't make his body do what he wants it to do
- can't do what you want, if he doesn't want to

Session 2: All in the Game

This session offers parents a chance to look closely at the way children develop, how they act at various ages and how parents can manage them so that life goes more smoothly. Parents will begin by playing a traditional children's game and consider what games offer children and adults. Then they will identify some ways in which play changes with age. Parents will consider one expert's view of development, then break into small groups to discuss how to handle a child going through a difficult stage of development.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

Play is important for people of all ages. It gives them a chance to laugh, relax, try out skills, compete, socialize, and more. Play changes with age. Children's abilities affect the way they play. Because parents see their children playing every day, they know a great deal about how play changes as children develop.

When parents have an opportunity to recognize how much they know and to share this knowledge with others, their self-confidence grows. This self-confidence enables them to consider other people's views, including those of child development professionals, without feeling threatened or criticized.

According to Arnold Gesell and his followers at the Gesell Institute of Child Behavior, the way children act depends on their physical maturation, especially the growth of their nervous systems. The child's behavior follows a pattern in which periods of equilibrium, that is, being in balance or on an even keel, alternate with periods of disequilibrium when the child seems off balance and out of tune with the world. It seems as though the child's system gets disorganized in order to get reorganized at a higher and more complex level of behavior. In any case, the knowledge that children's behavior is likely to change because of their growth can help parents deal with them more calmly.

If preschool children were capable of living by adult rules of behavior, life would be much easier for parents. However, because children's understanding of rules and their ability to follow them develop very gradually during the preschool years, parents must figure out ways to manage difficult behavior and teach acceptable behavior little by little so that life goes more smoothly for everyone.

GOALS OF SESSION 2

To think about the importance of play for people of all ages.

To think about how age makes a difference in the way children play.

To consider one expert's view of development in light of your own experience with children.

To think about what you can expect of children at different ages and how you can manage them so that life goes more smoothly.

AGENDA

Games People Play

Playing at Different Ages

One View of Development

Rules of the Game

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session.

Large felt-tip markers, tacks, or tape.

Lined paper and pencils for small group activities.

Information sheets #1 - 3.

Sets of household objects: pots and pans with lids and a spoon; basin of water, cup and sponge; box of cereal, cans of food and paper grocery bag; cardboard boxes of various sizes; adult clothing such as hat, shoes, scarf, and gloves; two chairs, a bed sheet and a pillow.

Planning Ahead

The first step in planning ahead is to read the session plan and information sheets carefully. Next, choose what game you will play during the first activity. Then, collect the sets of household objects listed on the preceding page. You may make small changes or substitutions in the sets, but it is best to use those which are recommended.

Finally, plan how to arrange the room so that the transitions from large group to small groups will go smoothly.

Getting Started

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity of your choice to reacquaint parents with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Discuss the goals and agenda for the session using the large chart you prepared, as well as

information sheet #1. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

Games People Play

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To consider the importance of play for people of all ages.

To have fun playing children's games.

Introduce this activity by asking parents if there are any games which they enjoy playing -- monopoly, bingo, basketball, card games, etc. Lead a discussion of the role these games play in parents' lives using questions like the following:

How often do you play your favorite game?

What do you like about it?

How does playing make you feel?

Do you think adults have a need to play?

Next, invite parents to "step back in time" and play a traditional child's game. Choose one with which most parents will be familiar -- Pin the Tail on the Donkey, Blind Man's Bluff, Hide and Seek, a relay race, or a favorite of their particular ethnic group. Since the purpose is

to simply have fun, approach the activity in a lighthearted manner. When the game ends, you might ask if playing the game as adults was much different from playing it as children. Parents might also consider how their own children would react to this game.

Playing at Different Ages

(Approximately 45 minutes)

Purpose: To think about how a child's level of development affects the way he or she plays.

In this activity, parents will form small groups to discuss and demonstrate how children of different ages would play with common household objects. They will focus on the ages of eight months, two years and four years.

Divide the parents into six groups with three or four in each group. Give each group one of the following sets of household objects:

- pots and pans with lids and a spoon
- basin of water, cup, and sponge
- box of cereal, cans of food and paper grocery bag

- cardboard boxes of various sizes -- large to small
- adult clothing such as hat, shoes, scarf, and gloves
- two chairs, a bed sheet, and a pillow.

Ask each group to think about and discuss how children aged eight months, two years, and four years might play with the set of objects. The purpose here is to think about what children would naturally do with the objects without instructions from an adult. Parents can develop their ideas from their own observations of children over the years. They should prepare to report their ideas to the large group and demonstrate how a child of each age might use the things. One person in each group could discuss and show what an eight month old might do while another reports on a two year old, and a third parent on a four-year old. Offer parents paper and pencils if they wish to write their ideas down, although that is not necessary.

The group should have about 15 minutes to work together. Then each group should take

about three to five minutes to report to the large group.

If time permits, you could discuss how four-year olds might play if they were given any two sets of objects with which to play, for instance, the pots, pans, and water or the clothes and groceries.

When the discussion is over, thank parents for their contributions and for the way they shared their knowledge of child development with each other.

Predicting what children will do at a given age shows a knowledge of the way children grow and develop. Parents gain this knowledge from practical experience with children. In the next activity, they will be looking at child development more closely.

One View of Development

(Approximately 40 minutes)

Purposes: To look at the Gesell philosophy of child development.

To consider and evaluate the Gesell view in light of your own experience with children.

Begin by explaining to parents that, in this activity, they will read about one view of child development and consider it in light of their own experience with children. By development we mean the gradual unfolding of a person's skills and abilities as he or she grows and matures. Parents watch this process every day. While parents are the real experts on their own children, it is sometimes helpful to get the view of a professional observer of children. to learn more about the way children develop. This knowledge can help make child-rearing easier.

Arnold Gesell and his followers at the Gesell Institute of Child Development have spent over half a century observing and studying children and looking for the pattern in their

development. Some of these views are presented on information sheet #2.

Distribute information sheet #2 and read it aloud. Then lead a brief discussion using the following questions:

> What do you think of Dr. Gesell's view of development?
>
> Have you ever noticed your child go from "good" to "bad" over a period of months?
>
> Have you ever noticed your child calming down after a period of being wild or hard to handle?
>
> Did your child ever begin to say "yes" after a long period of saying "no" or begin laughing more often than crying?

If parents have difficulty remembering such changes, you might remark that parents sometimes feel that changes in their children's behavior are caused by something they did or something that has gone wrong with the child. However, Gesell believes that, while parents can make matters better or worse by the way they handle a child, the child's behavior follows a rhythm of its own based on the child's growth.

Distribute information sheet #3 which provides more information on the ages and stages of the preschool child. Begin reading aloud the description of the 18-month old and move from this to the two-year old, going back and forth up the spiral. When you have finished, ask parents for their comments. Lead a brief discussion using the following questions:

> Do any of these descriptions sound like someone you know?
>
> Did your child go through any of the stages described on the information sheet?
>
> How does it feel to know that so-called "bad" behavior is normal at certain ages?
>
> Does it help to know that "problem" behavior is bound to improve as the child grows and matures?
>
> Does knowing that so-called "bad" behavior is normal at certain ages affect the way we might deal with it?

Do not allow the discussion to focus too long on discipline. Rather, draw the discussion to a close by commenting that parents are naturally concerned with handling problem behavior and the next activity will focus on that topic. End by thanking parents for sharing their ideas.

Rules of the Game

(Approximately 40 minutes)

Purposes: To look at one area of behavior -- getting dressed in the morning -- and think about how children of different ages might act.

To consider how to set reasonable expectations of a child, manage normal behavior, and enforce limits when necessary.

Begin by commenting to parents that as they probably have noticed, preschool children can't usually play a game by the rules. If a four-year old plays a game with an eight-year old, it won't be long before the older child is accusing the younger one of cheating, or playing his own way, or ruining the game. Learning to understand rules and play by them takes a long time. If preschoolers could live by adult rules, life would be much easier for their parents. Since they can't, parents must help them along in one way or another.

In this activity, parents will think about how to help children along with what should be a simple daily routine, but often isn't -- getting dressed in the morning. Ask parents to share

any problems their preschoolers have with this routine. After parents have shared their problems (spend no more than five minutes on this), ask them to take out information sheet #3 again, look it over, and tell at which ages a child might have the most problems getting dressed. Choose one of these ages for the next small group activity.

Break into groups of about five or six parents and ask each group to discuss the following three questions in terms of helping a child of this age to get dressed.

> How much can I expect of this child? (How much dressing can she do herself? How much can she cooperate with me?)
>
> How can I manage her behavior so that dressing goes more smoothly for both of us?
>
> When must I say "no" or put my foot down? What are some good ways to do this?

It might help to write these questions on a large sheet of chart paper for all to see. Remind parents to focus on the routine of getting dressed only. Offer parents paper and pencils to write their ideas down, if they wish.

Allow the groups about 20 minutes to discuss the questions, then ask them to select a reporter to give a brief summary of their ideas to the large group. When the reports are finished, ask parents to comment on the ideas they heard. Do they think any of the ideas would work for them?

End the discussion by thanking parents for all their ideas and remarking on how much they have to offer each other.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session 2 using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved.

Session 3

Time Out!

Goals

To think about how watching TV affects your child's development.

To think about how to get children's play started and to try out some activities that children can do alone.

To consider the value of spending time alone with your child each day.

To think about your importance to your child at home and at school.

Agenda

Looking at TV

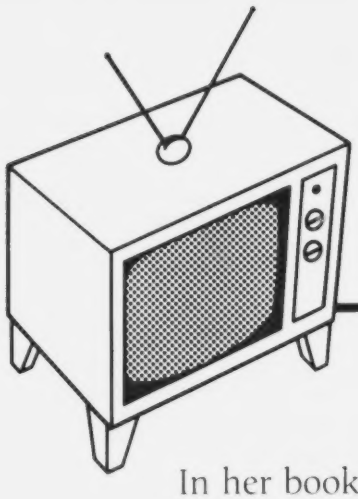
What's There to Do?

Just the Two of Us

You're Number One

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
The Plug-in Drug: One Expert's View of Television
Parent's Rights



The PLUG-IN Drug

One Expert's View of Television

In her book, **The Plug In-Drug**, Marie Winn expresses her concern that television acts like a drug. It allows the viewer to "blot out the real world and enter into a pleasurable and passive mental state." Like drugs or alcohol, she warns, television can be addictive.

Winn believes that children, in particular, are deprived of the real-life experiences they need when they sit for long hours passively watching TV. When the TV is turned off, they seem to be coming out of a trance. Often they are cranky and at loose ends as they enter the real world again. What effect do these TV "trips" out of the real world have on children's development, she asks? Following are some of her answers:

TV and Language Development: TV allows children to take in words and images but does not require them to form their own thoughts and feelings and put them into words. Only talking with other people does that.

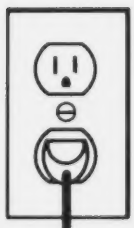
TV and Being Read To: Television allows children to enter an imaginary world without an adult along to provide explanations and comfort, if need be. When adults read to children, children have the guidance and support they need.

TV and Learning to Read: To read you must concentrate and think. TV allows you to sit back and let the words and images wash over you.

TV and Becoming A Reader: Watching TV is easier than reading. Given the choice between reading and watching TV, children will watch TV.

TV and School Achievement: Most research shows that the more television children view, the lower their school achievement.

TV and Play: TV takes time away from children's play — their natural way to learn — and gives them little in return.



PARENT'S RIGHTS

The National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE) believes that parents should have "rights" in their relationship with their child's school. A few of these rights are based on the constitution, federal or state laws, or Supreme Court rulings. Most are expectations which NCCE believes are reasonable and fair. They can be used as a guide for parents as they build a good relationship with their child's school.

***You Have a Right to Information About:**

Teachers and principal — their background and experience.

School policies, rules and regulations in areas of health, attendance, discipline, and behavior standards.

Sources of all rules and policies, whether state law, local district policy, or policy of the school principal.

Grievance procedures — how you can appeal rules and regulations with which you disagree.

Academic requirements, criteria for student evaluation, homework regulations, standards for promotion, problems your child may have with school work or behavior.

Curriculum — what is being taught, how the curriculum is organized, how students are grouped for instruction, and what methods are being employed in the classes.

*Adapted from "You Have a Right to Become Involved in Public Schools," National Committee for Citizens in Education, Suite 410, Wilde Lake Village Green, Columbia, Maryland 21044-2396.

You Have a Right to:

Review all records kept by the school about your child, and to challenge inaccurate information or material which you believe is an invasion of privacy.

Visit the school and your child's classroom or see your child's teacher or the principal after making arrangements with the school office and the classroom teacher.

Have individual teacher conferences several times a year, in privacy, with a translator if needed, at a time convenient to both parent and teacher.

Participate in decisions about your child's grade placement, promotion or retention, as well as assignment to a special class or services.

Get help for a child who is not doing well.

Appeal school decisions affecting your child.

Organize and participate in parent organizations.

Attend and speak at school board meetings.

Be notified before a change in your child's placement, retention in grade, or assignment to a special classroom can be made.

Session 3: Time Out!

In this session, parents will think about taking time out -- time out from television, time out for themselves, time out to be alone with their children, and time out to support their children at school. Parents will discuss their own concerns about television and the views of a writer on the subject of television's effect on child development. Next, they will investigate and try out some activities that will occupy children while parents take time for themselves. Then, they will brainstorm some ideas on how to spend time alone with their children each day. Finally, they will discuss their importance to their children in school.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

Many parents today are worried about what their children see on television. Some feel guilty that they allow their children to watch shows of questionable value or watch too much TV altogether. Writer Marie Winn believes that the

act of watching TV is even more harmful to children than the content of the shows. By reading about and discussing the effects of television on children, parents can prepare to control television-watching in their homes.

Many parents today have come to depend on TV as a way to occupy children so that they can have time to themselves. If parents want to limit their children's television viewing, they will have to find other more beneficial ways to keep their children busy. In the days before television, parents often accomplished this by giving children a bit of help in their play to "start them off." The parent might suggest a doll party, get out the blocks and begin a building, or get the child started in some other time-consuming activity that could be continued without help. While these activities are not as completely engrossing as television, they provide the kinds of experiences that promote children's development.

While children need to learn how to occupy themselves alone, they also need time with their parents, one-to-one. Children love their parents

dearly and want to be alone with them, just as all lovers want to be alone with their loved one. Finding time to be alone with each child, even for just 15 minutes, each day can be hard. But it is likely that such regular individual attention will strengthen the parent's relationship with his or her child and lessen the child's undesirable attention-getting behavior.

Parents are the most important people in their children's lives. They know their children best and love their children most. When children leave home and start school, they need their parents' involvement as much as ever. When parents recognize that they are the "experts" on their own children, they are more likely to get involved in their children's education. Parents' participation in school activities lets their children know that they care about them and value their schoolwork. Their participation lets the teachers know that the parents are interested, watchful, and concerned about their children's education.

As parents complete LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN, they will benefit from reviewing what

they have accomplished as individuals and as a group. Receiving certificates and celebrating the completion of the program are important elements in achieving the program goals.

GOALS OF SESSION 3

To think about how watching TV affects your child's development.

To think about how to get children's play started and to try out some activities that children can do alone.

To consider the value of spending time alone with your child each day.

To think about your importance to your child at home and at school.

AGENDA

Looking at TV

What's There To Do?

Just the Two of Us

You're Number One

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session.

Large felt-tip markers and tacks or tape.

Information sheets #1 - 3.

Materials for activity centers listed on page 49.

Planning Ahead

Begin preparations for this session by reading the session plan and information sheets carefully.

Ask your program's education specialist and classroom teachers to help you gather materials and prepare for the activity, "What's There To Do?" Ask your local librarian to recommend some books, story-records, and story-tapes and to serve as a resource person during the activity. You and your co-leader will need two assistants for the activity, so that there is one resource person at each of the four activity centers; ask staff members or suitable friends to help.

Plan how you will arrange the room to accommodate the activity centers, as well as the award ceremony and celebration afterwards. Decide how to award certificates and serve refreshments. If you wish, choose a party game to play.

Getting Started

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity. Then discuss the goals and agenda for this session using the large chart you prepared as well as information sheet #1.

Looking at TV

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To think about how watching TV affects your child's development.

To think about your role in controlling the TV in your home.

Explain to parents that in this activity they will be looking at how watching TV affects their children and at their own role as parents in charge of the TV. They will warm up to the topic by raising their hands in response to the following questions:

How many of you enjoy the peace you have when your children watch TV?

How many of you ever worry about what your children see on TV?

How many of you think that watching TV is good for children?

How many of you find that your children are grouchy or overactive after watching TV?

How many of your children love to watch TV?

How many of you think your children would be better off playing than watching TV?

How many of you would find it hard to stop your children from watching TV?

Thank parents for their responses and comment that the issue of TV-watching is an important one for parents to think about. According to a 1983 Nielson Report, children in the 2-5 age group spend more than 27 hours a week watching television and other surveys indicate that they watch as much as 54 hours a week. Ask parents if they have any concerns about their children watching TV.

Allow about five minutes for parents to express their concerns or problems about television. It is likely that the discussion will focus on the content of TV shows. You can draw the discussion to a close by saying that a writer named Marie Winn has looked at television and children from a new angle. She is concerned not so much with <u>what</u> children watch, but rather what effect the <u>act of watching</u> TV has on children.

Some of her views, taken from her book, The Plug-In Drug, are presented on information sheet #2.

Distribute information sheet #2 and comment that it gives the views of one expert. Then read it aloud. Afterwards, lead a discussion using the following questions:

> Marie Winn has strong views on television. What do you think of them?
>
> How much TV is too much for children?
>
> If parents watch TV and discuss it with children, would that make it any better?
>
> If you wanted to cut down on how much your children watched TV or to cut out TV altogether, what difficulties would you run into?
>
> Do you think you could manage if your children didn't watch TV?
>
> Who makes the decision about what your children watch and about how long they watch TV?

After about ten minutes, draw the discussion to a close, by commenting that the two important steps parents must take if they are to limit TV-watching are: 1) to make a firm decision to do so; and 2) to figure out how to keep children busy instead. Parents have come to depend on TV as a way to get a few moments to themselves. If they

want to limit TV viewing, they will have to figure out other ways to get those precious moments alone. In the days before television, parents often accomplished this by giving children a bit of help in their play to "start them off." The parent might suggest a doll party, get out the blocks and begin a building, or get the child started in some other time-consuming activity that could be continued without help. Tell parents that they will have a chance to try out some activities that children can do on their own in the next activity.

What's There To Do?

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Purposes: To try out activities that children can engage in alone.

To think about how to get children's play started and keep it going.

In this activity, parents will try out some activities that have been set up at tables before the session began. If possible, have a staff member or resource person at each table to introduce the materials and get parents involved in an activity. The following activity centers

should be set up at separate tables with materials and suggestions for parents to look at and try out.

Activity	Materials	Suggestions
Games	Matching games such as Lotto and Memory. Pasta in different shapes mixed together and bowls. Table knives, forks and spoons and flatware tray. Preschool puzzles.	Set up matching games as a "Solitaire" activity. Sort pasta according to shapes and put in bowls. Mix up flatware and put back in right space in tray. Put puzzles together.
Make-Believe Grocery Store and Kitchen	Canned goods, boxes of food, paper or plastic bags, play money, old wallet, pocketbook. Small table or cardboard box (substitute for table), pots, pans, spoons, forks, napkins, apron.	Play going to grocery store, being the cashier or shopper, selecting food, paying for it, going home, putting food away, cooking a meal, eating it.
Art	Play dough (with recipe), cookie cutters, rolling pins, blunt knife; crayons, a variety of papers such as brown paper bags, cardboard, old magazines, blunt scissors, paste, string.	Play dough: make "cookies," animals, people, bowls, crazy creatures, snakes, balls, beaded jewelry, crayons, etc. Make a "surprise" picture, a picture of yourself, a paper bag costume. Make a greeting card or holiday decoration.
Looking and Listening	Picture books, story-records, story-tapes from public library. Information on library hours, regulations and services. Record player and tape player.	Look at picture books, listen to tapes and records.

Explain to parents that they will be trying out some activities that their children could do alone or with a friend without much help from adults. Have parents form four small groups with each group going to a different activity center. After ten minutes at each center, ask each group to move to the next one. Continue rotating until each group has visited each center. Then ask parents to return to the large group.

If possible, have a resource person at each center; staff members, the local librarian, or friends suited to the job could help out. The resource person could show parents the materials, give them ideas for using them, and answer questions.

When parents return to the large group, lead a brief discussion using some of the following questions:

What center did you like best?

What activities do you think your child will enjoy?

Do you have any other ideas for keeping children occupied while you are doing something else?

How can you get children started playing? How can you keep them interested?

Is there any place in your home where you could set up a make-believe center? Is there a place where children could do art projects and keep their supplies together? If you borrowed books or records from the library, where would you keep them? Could you find a box or a drawer in which to keep your children's puzzles and games?

Bring the discussion to a close by thanking parents for sharing their ideas with each other.

Just the Two of Us

(Approximately 25 minutes)

Purposes: To think about how to find time to be alone with your children each day.

To think of what you might do when you are alone with your child.

Comment to parents that in the previous activity, they were figuring out ways to involve their child in play so that they would have time to themselves. Parents need time away from children so that they can get some work done or just relax. Children need to learn how to be alone and to have a quiet time, too. But they also want and need time with their parents, one-to-one, without having to share mom or dad with anyone else. Ask parents to <u>think</u> about the following questions: (They need not answer them aloud).

Have you ever loved someone and wanted to be alone with that person? How did you or would you feel if that person wanted to be alone with you, too?

How would you feel if that person only wanted to see you when other people were around?

How would you feel if that person never had time for you alone?

What might you do to get that person to pay attention to you?

Pause briefly after each question to allow parents a moment to think. At the end, comment to parents that some of the most painful memories for adults are those of feeling ignored or overlooked by someone they love. Then ask parents to brainstorm ideas on how to find time to be alone with their child -- someone who loves them dearly -- and what to do when they are alone.

Review the rules of brainstorming and then write, "When We Can Be Alone" at the top of a large piece of chart paper. Hang it where all can see it. Ask parents to give their ideas on when and how a parent might find 15 minutes to be alone with a child. When the list is complete, ask parents for their comments. Then ask how a parent and child might manage to get away from other family members. How would the parent manage time

alone with each child if there were many children in the family?

Next, write "What We Might Do" at the top of a new sheet of chart paper. Ask parents to give their ideas on what their child would like to do with them and what they would like to do with their child during their time together. When the list is complete, ask parents for their comments. You might also ask what effects this time together might have on their child's behavior and their relationship with their child. When the discussion has ended thank parents for sharing their thoughts with each other.

You're Number One

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To consider your importance to your child.

To think about how to support your child in preschool and beyond.

In the last activity, parents thought about their children's needs and desire for their time and attention. In this activity, parents will

once again look at how important they are to their children, both at home and in school.

Begin by asking parents to think about the following questions: (They need not answer them aloud.)

Who's the one who knows your child best?

Who's the one who loves your child most?

Who's the one on whom your child depends?

Who's the one on whom your child counts?

Who's the one who shows your child who he or she is?

Who's the one who teaches your child who he or she can become?

Pause briefly after each question to allow parents a moment to think. End by saying "That's right. You're the one. You're number one in your child's life." Remark to parents that they have looked at their importance in their child's life at home. Now they will have a chance to look at their importance to their child as he or she goes through Head Start and on to school.

Lead a discussion about how parents can support their children in school by using the following questions:

How can parents help their children get the most out of Head Start?

When you volunteer at Head Start or attend parent meetings and other activities, what message are you giving your child? What message are you giving your child's teacher?

By attending this parent education session, what are you telling your child? How has your child reacted to your participation in LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN? Do you think your child will benefit from what you have done here?

Head Start encourages parent involvement in all aspects of the program. Do public schools do the same?

What are some ways you might get involved in your child's school when he or she leaves Head Start?

Comment to parents that they have shared many good ideas for getting involved in their children's school. As they might have mentioned, getting involved in public schools means more than volunteering and attending parent-teacher meetings. It also means knowing how the school is run, what your children are learning, and how your children are doing. It means having a say in decisions that affect your children.

A parent involvement group called the National Committee for Citizens in Education has developed a list of "rights" or expectations parents should have in their relationship with

their children's school. Information sheet #3 lists some of these rights. Distribute information sheet #3 and read it aloud.

Ask for parents' comments or questions, then draw the discussion to a close by thanking parents, not only for sharing with and helping each other, but also for making the commitment to support their children at home and in school which they have demonstrated by participating in LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 25 minutes)

At this point, you should take a few moments to review with parents what they have done in LOOKING AT LIFE WITH OUR CHILDREN. You could use the goals and agenda for each session as guides. Then ask parents for their comments on the program and on their experience as part of the group. When everyone who wishes to comment or just say good-bye has had a chance to do so, thank parents for their unique contributions to the group and award each one a certificate of completion of the program. This can be done in the way you think is

most appropriate for your group. Then it's time to celebrate and enjoy the refreshments you have prepared. You might even play some party games to continue the theme of the session.

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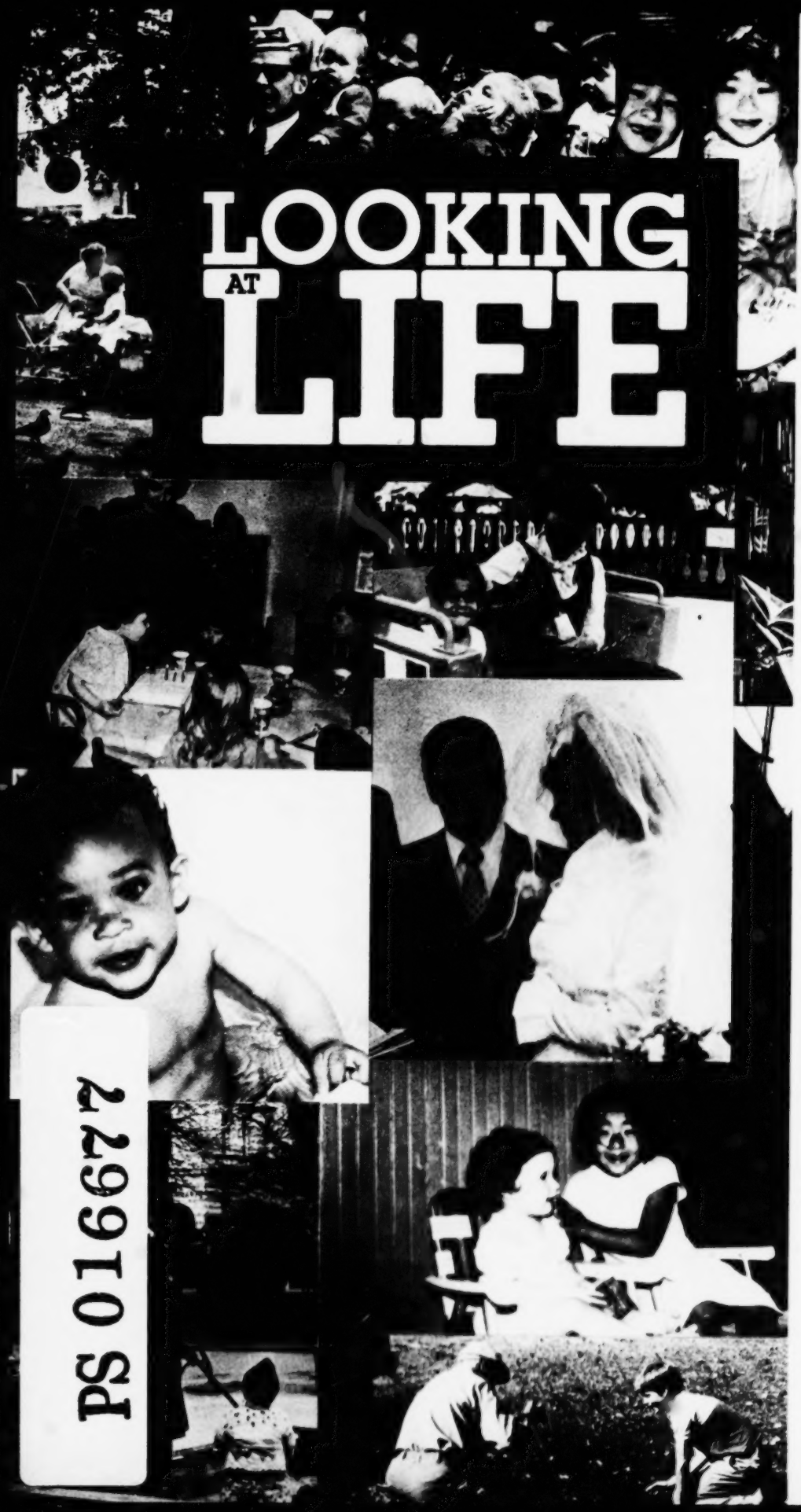

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As a Family

Looking at Life As A Family focuses on ways to strengthen family life. Parents begin by looking at the various combinations of people that can make a family and considering what qualities are important in family life. They learn the art techniques of collage and decoupage for making a family album and a treasure chest in which to store family momentos. These activities emphasize the importance of valuing the family as a group and taking pride in the accomplishments of individual members. Parents will look at the many influences on family life today and identify those which threaten it and those which support it. Participants will bring their own families to the last session where they will look at the ways to increase the "good times" in family life, then celebrate and socialize together.

Family Albums

- We Are a Family
- Ideal Family
- Beginning a Family Album
- Treasure Hunt

Family Treasures

- Treasure Chest
- Circles of Influence
- Protecting the Family Treasures
- Preparint to Paint a Family Portrait

Family Portraits

- A Portrait of My Family
- Good Times
- Let's Celebrate

Session 1

Family Albums

Goals

To look at the many combinations of people who can be a family.

To identify the characteristics of a family that you think are important.

To make and decorate a family album in which to record your family's activities and achievements.

To look at your family members as people to be treaured and remembered.

Agenda

We Are a Family

Ideal Family

Beginning a Family Album

Treasure Hunt

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Brainstorming
Family Albums
Decorating Your Album with Collage
When I Was Young
My Favorite Things

Brainstorming

Often people don't share their ideas with others for fear of being criticized. Brainstorming is a way for everyone to feel comfortable about sharing ideas, because no one is allowed to criticize them. The purpose of brainstorming is to hear every idea: one suggestion triggers another, and in this way good ideas are discovered.

In brainstorming it is very important to follow these four rules:

- **List every idea**, no matter how far out it seems to be. *(One person should be responsible for making the list.)*
- **Don't judge** whether ideas are good or bad, just call them out.
- There should be **no discussion** or comments until after the list is complete.
- **It's all right** to repeat an idea or to add to one already listed.

Family Albums

Family members are related to each other in many ways — by blood, marriage, and adoption, by a shared past and shared parents, by their needs and by their dreams. Members of families are individuals with separate lives but they are always related to each other.

Families grow stonger when each member sees himself as part of the group. Family albums are one way of looking at families as a group.

When families record information about all their members in one book, each person sees that he or she is important in the eyes of the others and that they are all important as a family. By recording the accomplishments of individuals in a family album, all of the family can take pride and share in each other's successes. And family albums provide a way for families to look back on their past together, the good times and the bad, and to draw strength for the present and future.

POLIO PIONEER

Below are some things you might keep in your album.

- photographs
- height and weight records
- awards
- report cards
- marriage, birth and death certificates
- children's drawings and school work
- greeting cards
- menus for holiday dinners
- calendars on which to record daily events
- lists of party or holiday guests

Can you think of any other things to put in your album?

Decorating Your Album with Collage

Collage (rhymes with garage) is a French word that means paste-up. It is an adult version of cutting and pasting that is used by famous artists and ordinary people alike. You can use collage to decorate the cover of your family album and many other things as well.

Any material that can be cut and pasted is good for collage. There are no rules with collage — use whatever you like in any way you wish. Choose materials that attract you or "say" something that you want to say; arrange them on the paper in a way that pleases you. Below are some ideas for materials and ways to use them.

Ways to Use Them

- Cover the whole page with one piece of paper or fabric.
- Make a border using strips of paper or same-shape pieces of different paper.
- Make a center design or label.
- Arrange a group of pictures or things that remind you of your family.
- Fold paper several times and cut out a person with arms extended up — open up so that several cut-outs are holding hands.
- Cut out pictures that represent the four seasons or holidays.
- Make a border of various flowers with a floral arrangement in the center.

Materials

paper of all kinds
fabric
lace
trim, rickrack, ribbons
paper lace
metal or paper foil
wallpaper
photographs
pictures from magazines
printed words
from magazines
old sheet music
pages of old books
natural materials —
leaves, pressed flowers, ferns
old letters, post cards, greeting cards

When I Was Young
by

_____

My family lived _____

_____

I went to school _____

_____

When I grew up, I wanted to be _____

_____

At home, I was expected to _____

_____

I loved to play _____

I loved to eat _____

We all wore _____

_____

The most important thing I learned was _____

_____

I'll never forget the time _____

_____

The people I loved most were _____

_____

My Favorite Things

by

_____

Color _____

Song _____

Season _____

Holiday _____

Food _____

Place to go _____

Things to do _____

Book _____

Television Show _____

People to be with _____

Session 1: Family Albums

In this first session of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY, parents will look at a wide range of families, consider what is important in family life, and make a family album. First, parents will look at the "We Are a Family" poster and discuss the nature and purpose of families. Next, they will learn the technique of brainstorming in order to share their ideas about the most important qualities a family can have. Parents will then make and decorate a family album and plan ways to keep a lively record of their family's activities and achievements. Finally, parents will prepare to hunt for information and objects to keep in their new album or in the keepsake box which they will make at the next session.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

There is no greater influence on people than their families. Through their relationships with their family members, children learn who they are and how to relate to others outside the family. Strong families give needed support, not only to their members, but also to society as a whole. Schools, churches, community organizations and local and national governments are only as strong as the families they represent.

In America today, families are comprised of many different groups of people. Who is in a family affects how the family meets it needs. Some families rely on their members for meeting most of their needs, while other families go beyond their relatives for more support. What is most important in family life, however, is the quality of relationships and the nature of care given to children.

While no family can be perfect, it is important for families to decide on the qualities they would like to have and to find ways to support each other in developing those qualities. If loyalty to each other is important to a family,

for instance, parents might avoid comparing their children unfavorably with each other in order to decrease competition among them. They might also reward their children for praising and defending each other outside their home.

A family is a group of people who are related to each other. A family grows stronger when each member sees himself as part of the group. By recording the accomplishments of individuals in a family album, all of the family can take pride and share in each others' successes. And family albums provide a way for families to look back on their past together, the good times and the bad, and to draw strength for the present and future.

GOALS OF SESSION 1

To look at the many combinations of people who can be a family.

To identify the characteristics of a family that you think are important.

To make and decorate a family album in which to record your family's activities and achievements.

To look at your family members as people to be treasured and remembered.

AGENDA

We Are a Family

Ideal Family

Beginning a Family Album

Treasure Hunt

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session

Poster, "We Are a "Family"

Information sheets #1-6

Several sheets of large chart paper, felt tip markers, and tacks or tape

12" x 18" manila or similar weight paper (15 pages for each participant)

Yarn, ribbon, cord, or shoestring

Scissors, mat knife, or razor

Hole-puncher

Elmer's Glue

Paint brushes, cans for water, and cups or bowls for thinning glue

A selection of materials listed on information sheet #3

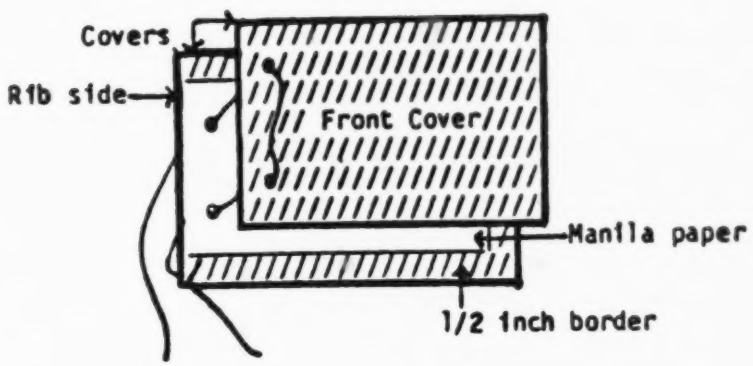
Planning Ahead

To prepare for and to lead this session and the ones which follow, it would be wise to ask someone to serve as co-leader. By sharing the tasks of preparation and by supporting each other during the sessions, two people can make the job easier. If neither you nor your co-leader are comfortable with arts and crafts, you would do well to ask someone--staff member, parent or friend--to help in preparing for the two art projects which are part of this module.

The first step in planning ahead is to read all three session plans of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY so that you see how the activities and sessions flow. Next, reread Session One with particular attention to the purposes and time allotments for each session. Finally, reread in order to decide how you and your co-leader will share responsibilities in leading the session.

The next step in preparing for the session is collecting the necessary materials and learning

how to make an album. To make the album, you put about 15 sheets of 12" x 18" manila paper between two sheets of heavier paper. The heavier paper should be cut 1/2 inch larger than the manila paper on three sides. On the fourth side or rib side, you should punch two holes, one inch from the rib's edge and two inches from the top and bottom of the covers. Then thread yarn, ribbon, cord or a long shoestring through the holes to tie the sheets of paper together. Below is a drawing of the almost finished product.



You should make an album in advance to show parents what theirs will look like. Parents can assemble their albums during the session, but you should have the covers already cut to the right size and have the holes punched in the paper and covers.

During the session, parents will decorate the covers of their albums using the technique of collage (rhymes with garage) which is an adult version of cutting and pasting. There are many, many ways to decorate using collage; you can offer parents a wide variety of materials and suggestions or focus on just a few. Information sheets #3 and #4 offer some ideas and suggested materials. You (or one of your talented friends) might decorate several sample covers to stimulate parents' imaginations or you might show examples of collages found in library books. In any case, choose the approach to this project with which you feel most comfortable. When in doubt, keep things simple.

The basic materials you will need are scissors for each parent, water soluble glue such as Elmer's or Sobo, water and pots for thinning the glue, and brushes to apply the glue or to glaze the finished cover with watered-down glue. Also, collect those materials from information sheet #4 which you think are best suited to the project you have in mind.

You should arrange the room or rooms you will use so that the chairs form a circle for the first part of the session. You will need to put chairs around a table for the album-making activity.

If you plan to provide refreshments at this first session, figure out when and where you will serve them. For the next two sessions, parents might bring some refreshments themselves.

Getting Started

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity of your choice to acquaint parents with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Discuss the goals and agenda for the session using the large chart you prepared, as well as information sheet #1. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

We Are a Family

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To look at the many combinations of people who can be a family.

To think about what makes a family a family.

Display the "We Are a Family" poster so that all parents can see it. Explain that the poster was designed as part of the Exploring Childhood Program, another parent education program. It was intended to show a wide range of family groups. All of the people who took part in designing the poster had their own ideas about which kinds of family groups to include. They even found it difficult to decide how to arrange the photographs --when they changed the arrangement, the whole mood of the poster seemed to change, too.

Invite parents to come closer to the poster and look at the individual pictures. When they have all had a chance to examine the pictures and return to their seats, begin a discussion by asking if their first impressions of the poster changed after they looked at it closely. After several parents have shared their impressions of the poster, ask if the parents agree with the designers of the poster that all the groups of people really are families. Remember that

individuals might disagree on what constitutes a family and there is no need to push for agreement.

Guide the discussion with some of the following questions:

What do you think are the necessary parts of a family?

Do you think that the families in the photographs are all capable of meeting the needs of their members?

How might the size of a family affect the way the family meets the needs of its members?

Does who is in a family affect how a family meets its needs? Which is more important -- who or how?

If time permits, ask the parents to do one of the following activities:

Choose the photo which attracts you most and describe why.

Choose a pair of photographs which you find alike or different in some way and explain why.

Choose a family in which you would like to be a child and tell why.

Choose a family in which you would like to be a parent and tell why.

Wrap up the discussion by thanking parents for sharing their views and impressions. Tell them that you will keep the poster displayed so

that they can refer to it in the following sessions.

Ideal Family

(Approximately 40 minutes)

Purposes: To identify the characteristics of a family which parents value.

To think about why it is hard for families to be ideal.

To consider the value of having family "ideals."

To think of ways to encourage family members to develop the traits they value.

Begin by telling parents that the group will learn the technique of brainstorming so that they can share their ideas about what would make a family ideal. Distribute information sheet #2 which describes the skill of brainstorming. Read the sheet aloud, then repeat the four rules: 1) list every idea; 2) don't judge; 3) don't discuss until the list is complete; 4) repeat or add to ideas, if you wish. It might help to write these rules on chart paper for reference during this session and in the future.

Take a fresh sheet of chart paper and write "Ideal Family" at the top of it. Ask parents to brainstorm a list of the qualities that an ideal family would have. If necessary, give some examples such as "kind," "helpful" or "care about each other." Remember to write exactly what the parents say and to allow pauses or periods of silence during the brainstorming process to give parents time to think or get ready to speak out.

When you are sure that the parents have finished the list, read it over to them. Then lead a discussion using the following questions:

Would it be possible for any one family to have all these qualities?

Which of these qualities are most important in family life?

Why can't families always be ideal?

What are some of the pressures or problems that families face which make it hard to live up to their ideals?

Is it possible to adjust your ideals to fit your own situation?

Which is worse, to have too many ideals or too few? To have ideals that are too high or too low? Or to have no ideals at all?

Next, select one quality which most of the parents thought was important in family life and ask them to offer some ideas on how to encourage family members to develop this trait. After parents have shared their ideas, thank them and say that in the next activity they will look at another approach to strengthening their family.

Beginning a Family Album

(Approximately one hour and 10 minutes)

Purposes: To look at your family as a group of people who are related to each other and who can gain strength through their relationships with each other.

To enjoy making and decorating a family album in which to record your family's activities and achievements.

Explain to parents that in this activity they are going to share ideas for keeping a family album and actually make an album to take home with them. Begin by asking if any of the parents have a family photograph album, scrapbook, or other record of their family. Did any of them keep a baby book when their child was born? Did they ever keep a diary, a scrapbook, or an autograph

book when they were younger? Do they ever look over these records now and then? What are some reasons why people like to keep a record of the past?

After parents have shared some of their ideas, distribute information sheet #3. Read aloud the first three paragraphs. Then ask parents if they can see any other reasons for keeping a family album.

Next, read aloud the list of ideas for things to keep in the album. Read the last question and encourage parents to add to the list.

Show parents the album which you made in advance and guide them in assembling their albums. Then distribute information sheet #4 and read it aloud. Explain that it gives many ideas for decorating an album and tell them which approach the group will be taking. You might show the parents some examples of collage or some completed album covers to give them ideas.

Show them the materials that are available and demonstrate several ways to apply the glue:

Apply it directly from the container onto the paper to be glued.

Thin the glue with water in a pot or bowl and apply it with a brush.

Pour the glue onto a plate or scrap of paper and drag small pieces of paper lightly across it.

Brush a mixture of glue and water over the completed picture to produce a glaze (test to make sure that the colors won't run together).

Emphasize to parents that the purpose is to have fun while decorating the album. Be sure to encourage and compliment parents as they work and to find something good to say about each person's completed album. Remember that a personal touch is more important than a professional product. When parents have finished, thank them for their efforts.

Treasure Hunt

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Purposes: To prepare to collect objects that remind you of your family members and your family history.

To get ready to gather information about your relatives in a way that shows that you value them.

Explain to parents that they are invited, not only to begin a family album, but also to begin a treasure hunt, that is, a hunt for family treasures. During the next two weeks, they will be looking for two kinds of treasures. The first kind are things that are too big to fit in their album, but which are keepsakes, nonetheless.

Ask parents to begin collecting some of the following:

Things that belonged to your parents, grandparents or other relatives--clothing, jewelry, framed photos, favorite knick-knacks, or other objects.

Things your children have made -- Mother's Day gifts, clay sculptures, paper flowers, greeting cards, and other things.

Things that remind you of good times together--seashells from the beach, dried flowers from the park, party napkins and favors, matchbox covers, a rock found on a hike, a paper cup from the baseball game.

Explain that at the next session each parent will make a covered box in which to keep these treasures. The second kind of treasure is

knowledge of or information about a member of your family. The treasure hunt will give parents a way to find out more about their relatives, near or far, in a way that shows the relatives that they are valued or considered important. Information sheets #5 and #6 are guides for interviewing family members. These guides can be duplicated and used for more than one relative. They might also inspire parents to create their own personalized interview guides. When the sheets are completed they can be kept in the family album.

Distribute the information sheets and read them aloud to parents. Suggest that parents ask their relatives to fill out the sheets or, better yet, they might ask their relatives questions in order to get the information needed. They should not forget to fill out a sheet or two about themselves. Of course, parents can use these sheets or not, as they wish. At the next session, parents will have an opportunity to share what happened as they began their treasure hunt.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session One using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved.

As a Family

Session 2

Family Treasures

Goals

To learn the art of decoupage and make a treasure chest for storing family momentos and souvenirs.

To look at the many influences on a child growing up.

To identify what threatens families today and what supports them.

To make plans for the last session of Looking at Life As a Family.

Agenda

Treasure Chest

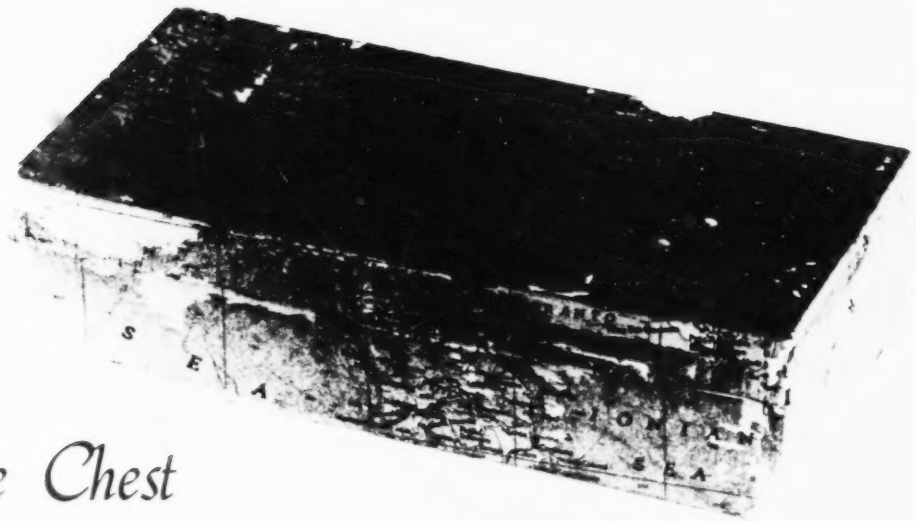
Circles of Influence

Protecting the Family Treasures

Preparing to Paint a Family Portrait

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Decorating Your Treasure Chest with Decoupage
Circles of Influence



Decorating Your Treasure Chest with Decoupage

A decoupage (day-coo-poj) means a cut-out. Like collage, it involves cutting out and pasting up. Unlike collage, however, decoupage usually means decorating a tray, box, chest, or other useful object with colorful pasted cutouts. All the materials that are good for collage are good for decoupage, too.

There are several ways to decorate a paper box with decoupage:

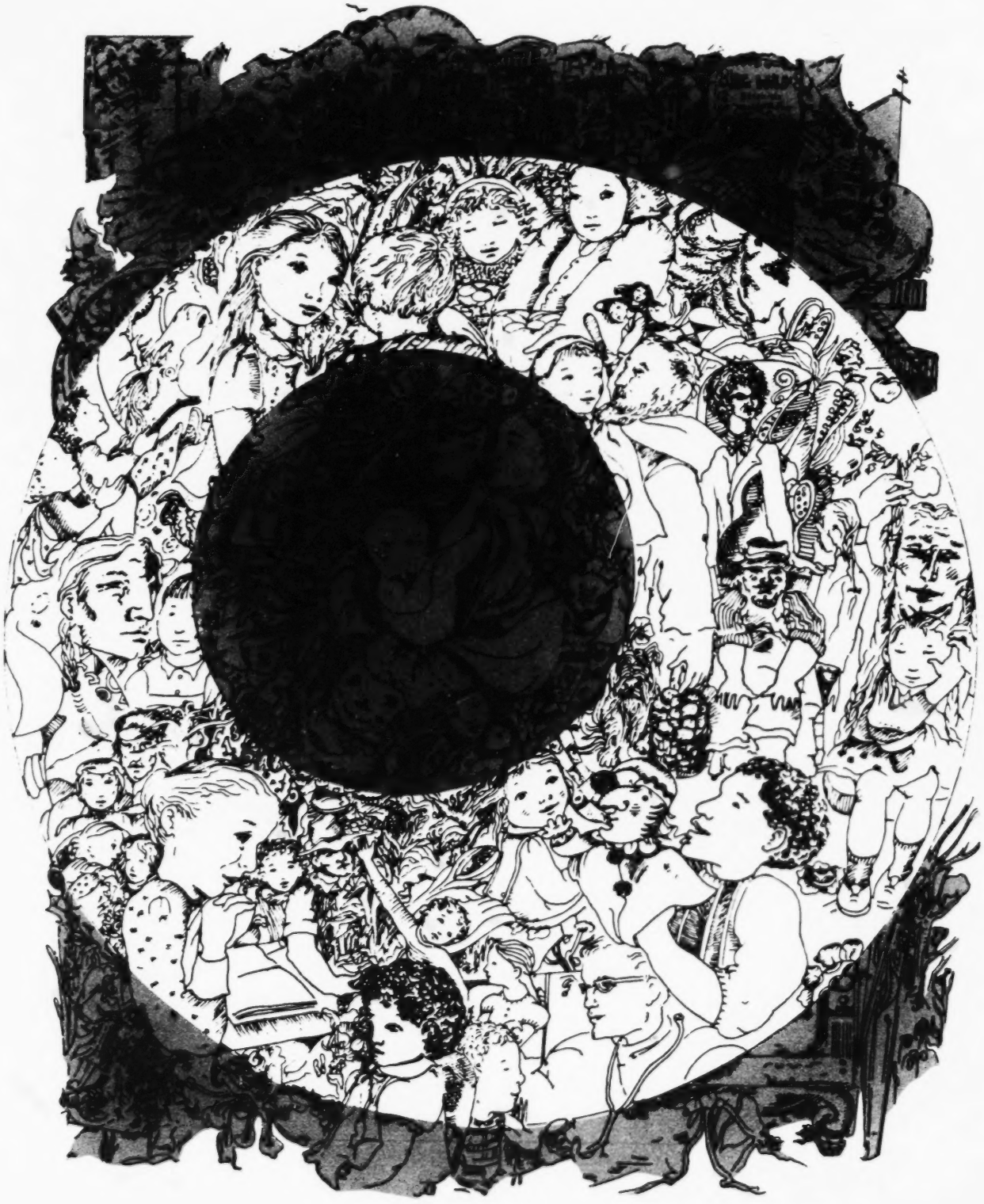
Paint it with a fast drying water-based paint and then paste on cut-outs.

Cover the entire box by pasting on paper or fabric, then add a decorative border or center design, if you wish.

Cover the lid and paint the bottom of the box or vice versa, adding decorative touches if you wish.

When your box has dried, you can add a coat or two of varnish to protect it and add luster.

Circles of Influence



Session 2: Family Treasures

Parents will start this session by sharing what happened as they began their hunt for family treasures during the last week. Then they will cover and decorate a box for storing the family mementos and souvenirs which they collect. Next, they will discuss the many influences on a growing child, identify what threatens family life today, and share ideas for strengthening their families. Finally, they will prepare for the last session of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

The word "treasure" brings to mind wealth, riches, money, precious metals, jewels and gems. It can mean anything valued and preserved as precious. People can be considered as treasures, too. In Japan, a person who is valuable to the country because of his talents and contributions is given the title of "National Treasure." When we think of family treasures, we might first think

of the things a family has kept safe over the years because they value them greatly. These might include, not only the family money and possessions, but also the trinkets and reminders of those they loved. Actually, it is the people in a family who are its greatest treasures.

Mementos of family members are treasured only because the persons themselves are valued. Letting family members know that they are valued is important. One way to do this is to make a special place, a "treasure chest," to keep family mementos safe. Another way is to express interest in family members, in the details of their lives and personalities, and in what they tell us about themselves. Asking family members about their favorite things or about life when they were young can open the door to the kind of communication which makes people feel cared about, listened to, and willing to care and listen in return.

If family members themselves are a family's greatest treasure, protecting them is a family's greatest task. There are many influences on children and the families who care for them.

Parents need to identify which influences are good for their family and which are bad, which support parents' authority and ability to teach their values to children and which undermine parents and children alike. By recognizing what threatens family life and what supports it, parents can take steps to strengthen their own family and develop a community which supports family life.

GOALS OF SESSION 2

To learn the art of decoupage and make a treasure chest for storing family mementos and souvenirs.

To look at the many influences on a child growing up.

To identify what threatens families today and what supports them.

To make plans for the last session of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY.

AGENDA

Treasure Chest

Circles of Influence

Protecting the Family Treasures

Preparing to Paint a Family Portrait

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session

Information sheets #1-3

Several sheets of large chart paper, felt-tip markers, and tacks or tape

One paper box for each participant (shoe box, gift box, or other similar weight box with lid)

Elmer's Glue

Water-based paint, such as artist's acrylic or house paint, in white and another color

Paint brushes, juice cans for water, and cups or bowls for thinning paint or glue

Pieces of fabric or paper large enough to cover a box

A selection of materials listed on information sheet #4 of Session One

Varnish

Scissors

Planning Ahead

The first step in planning ahead is to read the session plan and information sheets carefully. The next step is to collect the necessary materials and practice decorating a box with decoupage.

To learn how to decorate with decoupage (day-coo-poj), you might try several approaches. First, paint a box to cover the existing design and see how long it takes to dry. Then paste on a simple arrangement of cutouts such as flowers or a patterned border. Next, try covering another box with fabric or paper (gift wrap is probably too thin to hold up under the gluing process; wallpaper or other heavy-weight paper would be better).

The following suggestions are adapted from Decoupage: A Limitless World In Decoration by Dorothy Harrower.

> Starting with the lower part of the box, cut a strip of paper or fabric long enough to run around all four sides and wide enough to turn under at the bottom and over the top edge. Begin pasting this length of paper at one corner, first applying paste to the side

of the box (don't paste down the top or bottom edges of the paper strip until the sides are in position). When you get back to the corner where you started, give the paper or fabric an extra dab of paste and pinch the two ends together. Press them down on the box for a clean cut corner. When the material is fairly dry, cut it close to the box so that you have a finished corner. Next, paste down the edges along the top and bottom of the box, snipping out the extra piece made by folding at the corner.

To cover the lid of the box, cut a rectangle of the material so that it extends well over the side and edges. Spread the glue on top of the lid and place the material so that it is evenly distributed on all four sides. Press it into place by rubbing from the center to the sides all around. When it is fairly dry, work the sides and ends into position. Then paste each corner, pinch it, and when it is fairly dry, clip it as you did the bottom corners.

If you can come up with a better way to cover a box, please use that method. But whatever you do, make sure that you are familiar enough with the method to teach it to parents during the session.

In addition to boxes, fabrics, paper, paints, glue, brushes, and scissors, make available to parents an assortment of the materials that you used for decorating the albums during the last session. Parents can use these for a basic design

or a final touch for their boxes. Also, if it is possible, have clear varnish available for coating the finished boxes after they have dried. You might do this at the end of the session or suggest that parents leave their boxes behind and ask a volunteer to varnish them all before the next session. For this session, you will need to arrange the chairs in a circle for the opening activities, move to tables for making the treasure chest, and return to a circle for the later activities.

Getting Started

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity of your choice to reacquaint parents with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Discuss the goals and agenda of the session using the large chart you prepared, as well as information sheet #1. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

Treasure Chest

(Approximately one hour and 15 minutes)

Purposes: To share what happened as you began your treasure hunt during the past week.

To learn the art of decoupage and make a treasure chest for storing family mementos and souvenirs.

Invite any parents who wish to share what happened as they began their treasure hunt during the past week. Some of the following questions might stimulate a brief discussion:

How did your family react to your search for objects and information about them?

Did you run into any difficulties or have any surprises?

Did you find out anything new about your family?

Next, explain that the group will be covering and decorating boxes in which they can keep the objects they found. Distribute information sheet #2 and read it aloud. Describe to parents the approach you will be taking to covering and decorating treasure chests. Demonstrate the technique to parents and show them some finished boxes. Then guide and encourage parents as they work on their own treasure chests.

Circles of Influence

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Purposes: To look at the many influences on a child growing up.

Distribute information sheet #3 and explain that the drawing shows people grouped in several circles around a baby in the womb. Each circle represents a sphere of influence on the growing child. Ask parents to tell what they think each circle represents. Parents are likely to offer some of the following ideas:

First circle: the womb.

Second circle: immediate family -- parents, brothers, sisters and others living in the same home.

Third circle: those beyond the immediate family--grandparents and other relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, storekeepers, members of the church and community.

Beyond the third circle: the broader culture and society--lawmakers and elected officials, police, actors, singers, radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, and advertisements.

Next, lead a discussion using the following questions:

When does each circle of influence begin to affect the growing child?

Is a child affected by outside influences when he is still inside his mother's womb?

Which circle has the greatest influence on a baby? On a preschool child? On a school-age child? On a teenager?

Do these same circles of influence affect parents and their ability to care for their children? How?

Draw the discussion to a close by thanking parents for sharing their ideas with each other. Tell parents that they will be looking more closely at influences on family life in the next activity.

Protecting the Family Treasures

(Approximately 50 minutes)

Purposes: To identify what threatens family life today.

To look at forms of support for families.

Begin by recalling with parents the people and things that they identified as family treasures in the opening activity of this session. Explain that the idea of family treasures can also include the values, qualities and behavior of family members that keep them strong, supportive, and together. During the Ideal Family activity in

the last session, parents identified some of these qualities that are important in family life. In this activity, parents will first brainstorm a list of things that threaten to weaken or destroy those qualities and even family members themselves. Then they will brainstorm a list of things that support families and help them to grow stronger.

Review with parents the rules for brainstorming. If they have the information sheet on brainstorming from the last session, you might reread it together. Then write "Threats to Families" at the top of a large sheet of chart paper and hang it where all can see it. Ask parents to think of things that might threaten, weaken, or undermine families today. What makes it hard for parents to raise children? What things weaken the values families are trying to uphold? Remind parents that they can say whatever comes to mind; their ideas might trigger the thoughts of other parents.

When the list is complete, give parents a chance to ask questions about things on the list

or to explain more fully what they meant. Then, ask parents to group together the things that weaken families from the inside and those that threaten families from the outside. This can be done by using two different colored pens to mark each item on the list. For instance, you can use red for inside and green for outside. Both colors can be used for things that fit into both categories.

Next, take a new sheet of chart paper and write "Supports for Families" at the top and hang it where all can see it. Ask parents to give their ideas of what helps families to grow stronger. Where can they get the help they need? Where can families find others who share their values? When parents have finished the list, ask them if they wish to ask a question about anything on the list or explain more about something they said earlier.

Next, ask parents to help you color code the things on the list to show which category they belong to: 1) supports inside the family or 2) supports outside the family. When this is done,

invite parents to look over the two sets of charts --"Threats to Families" and "Supports to Families." Ask if they think that the supports they listed would be effective in counter-balancing or warding off the threats they identified. Do they think additional steps are necessary to protect their family treasures? How might they go about getting the support they need inside and outside the family?

Draw the discussion to a close by commenting to parents that by participating in LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY they have taken a step in finding the support they need to strengthen their families. Getting to know other parents and sharing ideas with them is a good way for parents to help themselves as well as their families. In the next activity, parents will plan another way to get to know each other better.

Preparing to Paint a Family Portrait

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Purposes: To think about how to present a picture of your family at the next session.

To make plans for celebrating the completion of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY.

This activity is designed to give parents the information they need to prepare for the next session. Begin by inviting parents to bring their family--husbands, wives, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and others who are "like family"--to the next session which is, of course, the last session of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY. At the next session, each parent will be invited to "paint" a family portrait with words -- to tell about the family they grew up in and the family they are now raising. Encourage parents to illustrate this presentation with their family albums, photographs, items from their treasure chest, and family members themselves. Each presentation should take about five minutes.

Tell parents that after the presentations of their family portraits at the next session, everyone--participants and guests alike--will brainstorm ideas for ways in which families can work, celebrate, and have fun together.

Explain to parents that the last activity of the next session will give parents an opportunity to look back on their experience together, to think about what it meant to them, and to celebrate their completion of the program with a family party. Now is the time to make arrangements for refreshments and decorations for the party. If possible, you might arrange for someone to photograph each family and the group as a whole. These photographs would be welcome additions to the participants' family albums.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session Two using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved.

As a Family

Session 3

Family Portraits

Goals

To introduce your family to the group and to share some of your family history.

To get to know each other better.

To share ideas for having more good times with your family.

To summarize your experiences and celebrate the completion of Looking at Life As a Family.

Agenda

A Portrait of My Family

Good Times

Let's Celebrate

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda

Session 3: Family Portraits

Parents are invited to bring their families to this last session of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY. Parents will present portraits or descriptions of the families in which they grew up and the families they are now raising. Afterwards, the group will brainstorm a list of ways for a family to have good times together. Finally, parents will summarize their experiences in the program, receive a certificate, and celebrate their completion of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

Giving parents an opportunity to get to know one another is an important part of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY and when whole families get to know one another the benefits increase. These social contacts can help parents build a network of support for strengthening family life.

Every family experiences both good times and bad. Sometimes problems seem to overshadow the pleasures of family life. However, the experience of working, playing, and just being together can help families to weather the storms that inevitably come. That is why it is important to plan for family fun and to seize opportunities to turn everyday activities into "good times."

As parents complete LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY, they will benefit from reviewing what they have accomplished as individuals and as a group. Receiving a certificate and celebrating the completion of their program are important elements in achieving the program goals.

GOALS FOR SESSION 3

To introduce your family to the group and to share some of your family history.

To get to know each other better.

To share ideas for having more good times with your family.

To summarize your experiences and celebrate the completion of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY.

AGENDA

A Portrait of My Family

Good Times

Let's Celebrate

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session

Information Sheets #1 and 2

Several sheets of large chart paper, felt tip markers and tacks or tape

Planning Ahead

Time, space, and the arrangement of furniture are important considerations in planning for this session. If parents plan to bring young children, you might want to schedule the session before their bedtime. You might also plan supervised children's activities in another room for those who can't sit still until the party begins. You will need more space and chairs for the guests, too. Arrange the chairs so that the guests can easily join in the discussions and brainstorming activity. Also, plan how you will award the certificates and offer refreshments.

Prepare to bring your family to this session and to present a family portrait to the group. Your willingness to participate fully will help parents to see you as one of them.

Getting Started

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity of your choice to acquaint parents and guests with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Discuss the goals and agenda of the session using the large chart you prepared, as well as information sheet #1. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

A Portrait of My Family

(Approximately one hour and 30 minutes)

Purpose: To introduce your family to the group and to share some of your family's history.

Invite the participants to paint portraits of their families by introducing their family members and telling about the families in which they grew up and the families they are now raising. If parents are reluctant to go first, you might begin with your own presentation. As parents present their family portraits to the group, you might have to remind them of the time limits -- between five and ten minutes per person. Thank each

participant and the group as a whole for sharing something of their families and themselves with each other.

Good Times

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To think about the importance of families working and having fun together.

To share ideas on how to have more good times with your family.

Begin by commenting to parents that, as they prepared to present their family portraits, they probably had both happy and sad memories of their earlier years. When they thought about what they were going to say, however, they probably focused on their happy memories of the good times they had with their families. Explain that all families have problems, but when families work together and have fun together, they are better able to handle problems together. It is important for families both to plan to have good times together and to recognize everyday activities that can be turned into "good times."

In this activity, the group--parents and guests alike--will brainstorm a list of ways to make "good times" happen more often. Begin by going over the rules of brainstorming and encourage the guests to give their ideas, too. Take out a large sheet of chart paper and write "Making Good Times Happen" at the top. Then ask parents for examples of how families can work together, have fun together, create special occasions together, celebrate together, and just be together, more often. When the list is complete, give parents a chance to ask questions about things on the list or to explain more about something they said earlier. You might then lead a brief discussion using some of the following questions:

Which ideas would work in your family?

How can families find time to be together?

Which activities listed are free or very inexpensive?

How can you please everybody in the family when you plan an activity for fun?

Could some of these activities be done by several families together?

How can you organize activities so that both adults and children enjoy them?

Let's Celebrate

(Approximately 45 minutes)

Purpose: To discuss and summarize your experiences in LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY.

To receive a certificate and celebrate the completion of LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY.

At this point, you should take a few moments to review with parents what they have done in LOOKING AT LIFE AS A FAMILY. You could use the goals and agenda for each session as guides. Then ask parents for their comments on the program and on their experience as part of the group. When everyone who wishes to comment or just say good-bye has had a chance to do so, thank parents for their unique contributions to the group and award each one a certificate of completion of the program. This can be done in the way you think is most appropriate for your group. Then it's time to celebrate and enjoy the party you have planned.

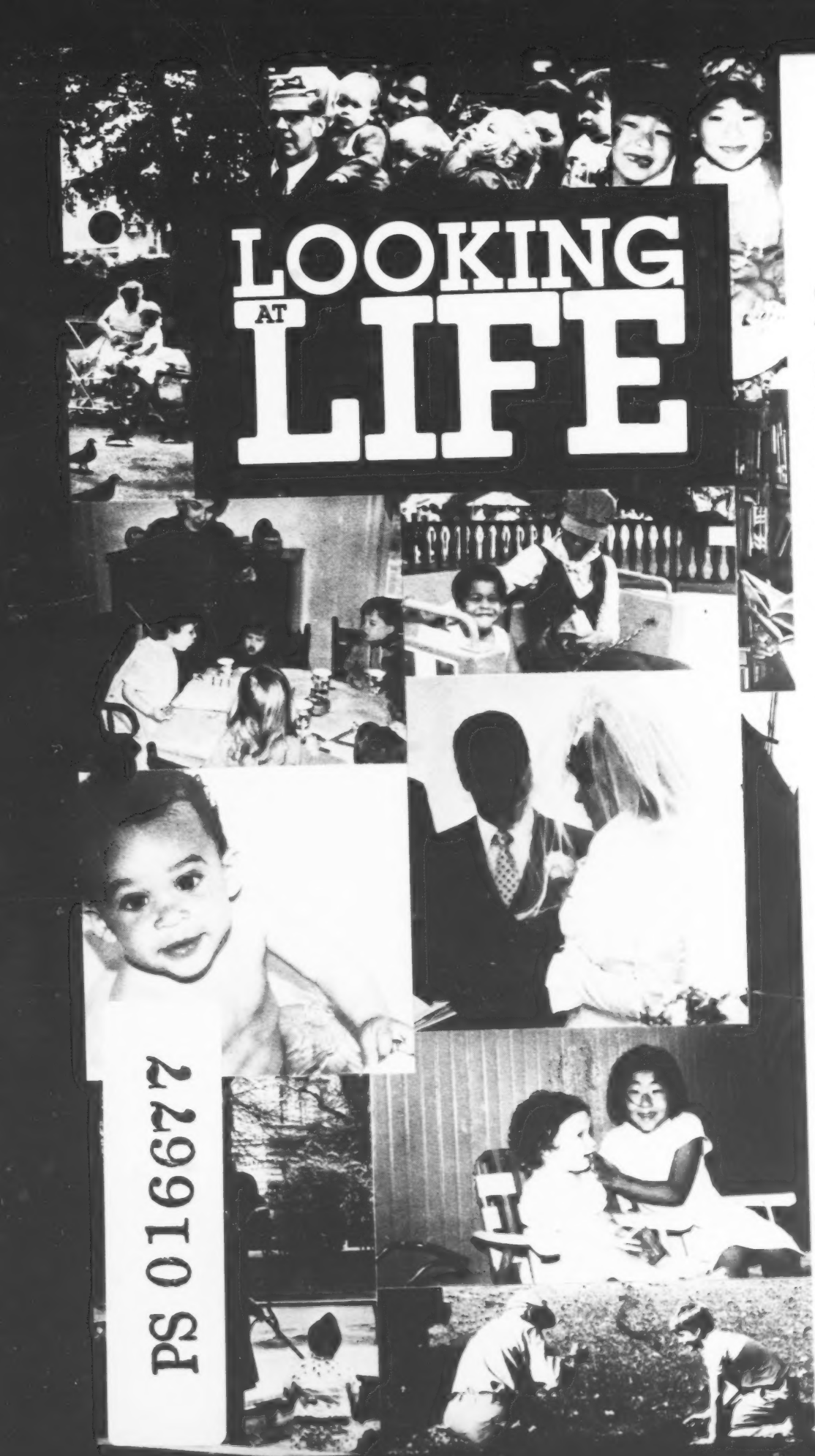
REFERENCES

Harrower, Dorothy. Decoupage: A Limitless World In Decoration. New York: Barrows Co., 1958.

ADDENDUM

The "We are a Family" poster is produced by and available through:

EDC School and Socity Programs
Education Development Center
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02160



PS 016677

Over The Years

In this module, parents take the long view of life, looking at their present situation in the perspective of the individual life span, the effect of one generation on the next, and the history of their race and ethnic group in America. They learn to role-play in order to practice ways to express and respond to needs for attention, to talk to their children about sexuality, and to promote their children's positive racial and ethnic identity. In each session, parents have opportunities to clarify their values and think about how to convey them to their children.

In A Lifetime

- You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby
- Attention, Please
- Could I Help You?
- Baby, Just Look at You Now

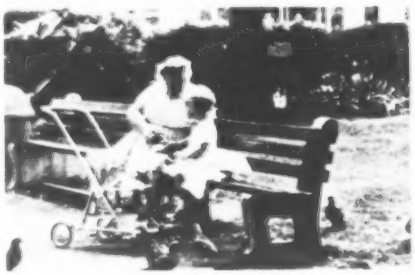
From Generation to Generation

- How Many of You?
- Ideal Parent
- What My Mother Never Told Me
- What's Important in Love

Our New Land and Old

- Where Did We All Come From?
- Some Came by Sea
- Coming to Know Who We Are
- Remembering Roots, Treasuring Traditions

Session 1



In a Lifetime

Goals

To get to know other group members.

To consider how a person's need for attention from others and ways of expressing this need change with age.

To learn the skill of role-playing in order to practice ways of seeking attention and responding to others' needs for attention.

To think about how people develop over the course of a lifetime.

Agenda

You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby

Attention, Please

Could I Help You?

Baby, Just Look at You Now

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Attention
Role-Playing
Brainstorming

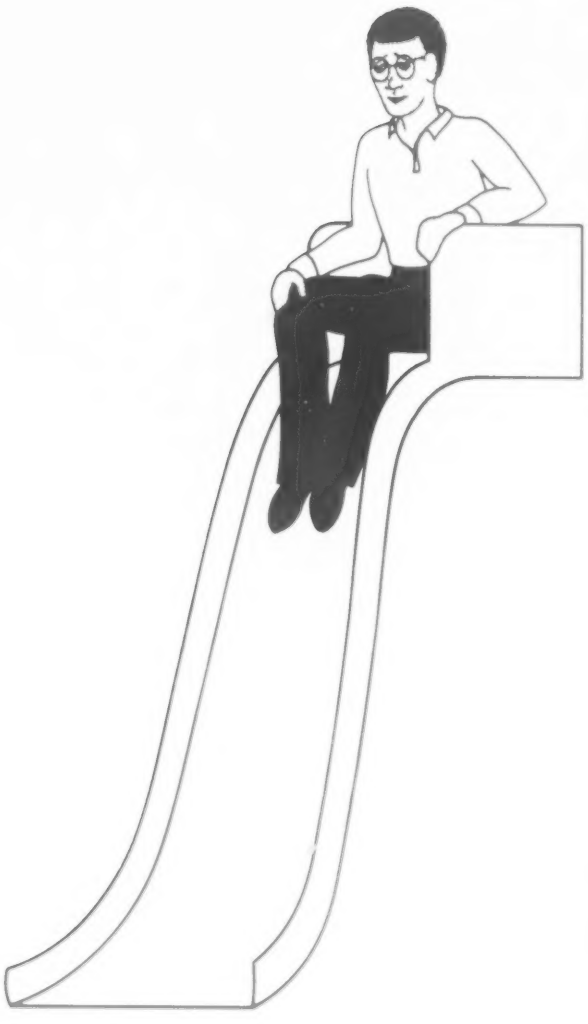
All of us no matter how old we are, need the attention of others. Over the years, however our needs change and so do our ways of expressing them.

As newborns, we could cry with a piercing intensity that adults found hard to ignore. A few months later, our sweet smiles, gurgles, and goos drew adults to us and enticed them to hug us, kiss us, and play with us. As we learned to crawl, walk, pull, tug, and finally talk, our means of getting attention increased greatly. We could follow others, grab them, and demand that they talk to us or give us what we wanted.

For babies, the attention of adults is vital; without it, they would die. As children grow, they need the attention of adults in order to remain healthy and safe and to learn and develop. Throughout childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age, people continue to need attention in various ways and for various reasons. As their needs change, so do their ways of expressing them.

What kinds of needs for attention would a four-year old have? How about a 14-year old? A 34-year old? A 64-year old?

How might a four-year old try to get attention? How about a 14-year old? A 34-year old? A 64-year old?



ROLE PLAYING

Role-playing involves putting yourself in the place of someone else in a given situation. If the situation involves a child who is afraid to go down a slide, and you are role-playing the child, just put yourself in the child's place. You don't have to "act" childlike — just be yourself feeling afraid. In this way you can help the person taking the role of the parent think up ways to help. You can say how each idea makes you feel — and which makes it easiest for you to overcome your fear.

Since this is just practice, many ways of helping can be tried without concern about failure — all will help you find out which ways work best.

If the idea of role-playing makes you feel uncomfortable, this feeling will soon disappear. The experience may also help you appreciate how a child who is trying something new might feel.

Brainstorming

Often people don't share their ideas with others for fear of being criticized. Brainstorming is a way for everyone to feel comfortable about sharing ideas, because no one is allowed to criticize them. The purpose of brainstorming is to hear every idea: one suggestion triggers another, and in this way good ideas are discovered.

In brainstorming it is very important to follow these four rules:

- **List every idea**, no matter how far out it seems to be. *(One person should be responsible for making the list.)*
- **Don't judge** whether ideas are good or bad, just call them out.
- There should be **no discussion** or comments until after the list is complete.
- **It's all right** to repeat an idea or to add to one already listed.

Session 1: In a Lifetime

This first session of LOOKING AT LIFE OVER THE YEARS focuses on human development over the course of a lifetime. Parents will begin by looking at each other's baby pictures to guess who's who and by telling each other about their start in life. After discussing how one's need for attention from others continues through life, parents will role-play situations in which people of different ages seek attention. Then they will brainstorm lists of achievements in social development to be expected at ages four, 14, 34, and 64. Finally, parents will have the opportunity to tell the group about older persons they know who have found satisfaction in their lives and relationships.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

Human development begins at the moment of conception and continues until death. Throughout life, everyone is challenged to grow and stretch

and adapt to change. Each stage of development --infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age--presents its own tasks. The successful accomplishment of these tasks brings satisfaction and paves the way for the next stage of development.

Social development is a long and complicated process that begins with the infant's gradual realization that he or she is separate from those around him. Slowly the baby responds then reaches out to others. The baby becomes deeply attached to his or her mother or primary care-giver and soon forms relationships with others in the family. As the child grows, his or her social relationships widen and become more complex. Finding a place in the world and developing satisfying relationships with others takes many years. Even established relationships, such as those between husband and wife or parent and child, change as life goes on. Finding satisfaction in relationships with others is a challenge at every age; succeeding at this task is the hallmark of a successful life.

GOALS OF SESSION 1

To get to know other group members.

To consider how a person's need for attention from others and ways of expressing this need change with age.

To learn the skill of role-playing in order to practice ways of seeking attention and responding to others' needs for attention.

To think about how people develop over the course of a lifetime.

AGENDA

You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby

Attention, Please

Could I Help You?

Baby, Just Look at You Now

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session

Several sheets of large chart paper

Large felt-tip markers and tape or tacks

Information sheets #1-4

Baby photographs of each participant to be brought to the session by participants

Planning Ahead

To prepare for and to lead this session and the ones which follow, it would be wise to ask someone to serve as co-leader. By sharing the tasks of preparation and by supporting each other during the sessions, two people can make the job easier.

The first step in planning ahead is to read all three session plans of LOOKING AT LIFE OVER THE YEARS so that you see how the activities and sessions flow. Next, reread Session 1 with particular attention to the purposes and time allotments for each session. Finally, reread with an eye toward how you and your co-leader will share responsibilities in leading the session.

The next step in preparing is to learn the two skills introduced in this session--role-playing and brainstorming. Read the information sheet on role-playing, as well as the guidance in the session plan. Then practice role-playing with

a group of friends or co-workers: first, take a role yourself; then direct other role-players and lead a discussion about what happened. If you practice and become comfortable with role-playing, it is more likely that the parent group you lead will be comfortable, too. In the same manner, read the information sheet and guidance on brainstorming, then practice leading a group through this activity.

If you plan to provide refreshments at this session, decide when and where you will serve them. For the next two sessions, parents might bring some refreshments themselves.

Ask each parent to bring to the first session a photograph of himself or herself as a baby or young child.

Getting Started

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Begin with a brief warm-up activity to get parents acquainted with each other. Then give a

brief overview of LOOKING AT LIFE OVER THE YEARS including the following points:

> Parents will have an opportunity to look at how people develop and change over the course of a lifetime.
>
> They will look at the relationships between parents and children and between one generation and the next.
>
> Parents will think about their values--what they believe is important in life--and consider how values are passed on from parents to children.
>
> Parents will share where they or their ancestors came from and discuss how their "roots" affect their life in America and their sense of who they are.

Allow time for parents' comments or questions and then go over the goals and agenda for Session One using information sheet #1 and a large chart of the goals and agenda which was prepared in advance. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Purpose: To get to know other group members.

When parents enrolled in LOOKING AT LIFE OVER THE YEARS, they were asked to bring to the

first session a photograph of themselves as a baby or child. Collect the photographs, if you have not done so already, and display them on a bulletin board or hold them up, one at a time, for parents to see. Ask the group if they can tell who among them was the baby in the photograph. When all the babies have been identified, ask parents to take turns telling the group a little about their start in life including such things as their birthday, place of birth, and any interesting details about the event or their family at the time. Keep in mind that the purpose is for parents to socialize rather than to share intimate details of their lives. At the end, thank parents for telling the group something about themselves.

Attention, Please

(Approximately 25 minutes)

Purpose: To consider how a person's need for attention from others and ways of expressing this need change with age.

Comment to parents that the darling babies whose photographs they just saw in the previous activity were all capable of seeking the attention from adults that they needed in order to survive. People continue to need and seek attention all through their lives. In this activity, parents will be looking at how people's needs for attention and their ways of expressing their needs change with age.

Distribute information sheet #2 and read it aloud. Ask the questions at the end, pausing after each to allow discussion. Bring the discussion to a close by commenting that the next activity will focus on ways to seek attention and to respond to other people's need for attention.

Could I Help You?

(Approximately 50 minutes)

Purpose: To learn the skill of role-playing in order to practice ways of seeking attention and responding to others' needs for attention.

Explain to parents that, in this activity, they will learn the skill of role-playing in order

to practice helpful ways to respond to others' needs for attention. Role-playing is a method of acting out an imaginary situation as if it were really happening now. The situation is described to the role-player who then fills the role according to how he or she thinks it would feel to be in that situation.

Distribute information sheet #3 and read it aloud. Ask parents for their comments or questions.

Next, choose one of the role-play situations described on the next page and read the situation aloud to the whole group. (Do not read the briefings to the whole group.) Ask for two volunteers to play the two parts. Take each volunteer aside and read the briefing to him or her privately. Remind the players that, as they put themselves in someone else's shoes in the role-play, they should follow their own feelings and act as they would if they were really in that situation.

Situation	Private Briefing for Role-Player #1	Private Briefing for Role-Player #2
Seeking Attention at Four-Years A parent has come home from work and is trying to get dinner ready. The four-year old wants to show the parent some school work.	You are the parent. You are hungry and tired and want to get dinner ready as soon as possible.	You are four-years old. You missed your parents today. You want to show your parents what you made in school.
Seeking Attention at 14-Years It is morning. A parent is getting three children ready for school. The 14-year old wants the parent to sign his or her report card. The parent has not seen it before.	You are the parent. You are trying to get the four-year old dressed and the lunches packed. The school bus will be coming soon.	You are 14-years old. You want your parent to read and sign your report card. You are supposed to bring it back to school today.
Seeking Attention at 34-Years It is the birthday of a 34-year old single parent. No one seems to have remembered. The 14-year old asks permission to go to a friend's house after dinner.	You are the 34-year old parent. You are disappointed that no one remembered your birthday. You don't want to spend the evening alone.	You are 14-years old. You want to go to your friend's house after dinner. You think that some boys from school might be going there, too.
Seeking Attention at 64-Years It is evening. A 34-year old has settled down to watch a good movie on TV. The telephone rings. It is her 64-year old parent calling.	You are the 34-year old. After a hard day, you can finally relax and watch the TV show you've been looking forward to seeing. You don't want to be interrupted.	You are 64-years old. You live alone and are feeling lonely tonight. You'd like to have a nice conversation with your child.

Ask the role-players to begin. Stop the role-playing when one player has clearly sought attention and the other has responded in some way. This should take about 30 seconds. Do not let the role-play go on too long. The purpose is to act out one way of seeking attention and one way of responding. Cut the role-play as soon as you have enough action to discuss.

After the role-play, ask the observers to comment on what they saw and felt. Lead a brief discussion using the following questions:

> Was the behavior of the players believable?
>
> How did the person who wanted attention try to get it?
>
> How did the other person respond? Why do you think he or she responded that way? Did the response help the person who wanted attention?

Next, ask the role-players to comment on what happened. Ask questions such as:

> Why did things turn out the way they did?
>
> How did you feel about what happened?

After the players have had a chance to comment, ask them to take the same role again, but

this time try a different approach to getting attention and responding. Remind them to follow their own feelings as they play their role.

Once again, cut the action as soon as the players have had a chance to seek attention and respond. Ask for comments on what happened, first from the observers and then from the players. Focus on what effects each player had on the other.

Try another role-play with two new players. Follow the same procedure as before:

Read the situation aloud to the whole group

Brief the players privately

Start the role-play and cut the action when enough has occurred to discuss

Ask for comments from the observers first and then from the players

Repeat the role-play with the same players

If time permits, try another role -play repeating the previous procedure. Allow about five minutes at the end of this activity for a brief discussion using the following questions:

How do ways of getting attention change with age? Do some ways stay the same over the years?

How can you respond helpfully to someone's need for attention? Does the way in which you respond depend on how old the person is?

Looking back over the role-plays, can you tell some ways of seeking attention that work better than others?

Draw the discussion to a close by thanking parents for taking part in the role-plays and for sharing their ideas with each other.

Baby, Just Look at You Now

(Approximately 50 minutes)

Purposes: To think about how people develop over the course of a lifetime.

To identify what achievements in social development you might expect at ages four, 14, 34, and 64.

Begin by telling parents that the group will learn the technique of brainstorming in order to share their ideas about how people grow and change over the course of a lifetime. Distribute information sheet #4 which describes the skill of brainstorming. Read the sheet aloud, then repeat the four rules: 1) list every idea; 2) don't

judge; 3) don't discuss until the list is complete; 4) repeat or add to ideas, if you wish. It might help to write these rules on chart paper for reference during this session and in the future.

Explain to parents that they will be focusing on the social development of a person. Social development begins with baby's first smile, her recognition of her mother, and her delight in playing with others. Gradually and in increasingly complicated ways, the developing person makes progress in the following areas, to name a few:

- . getting along with others
- . being a member of a family
- . finding a place in the neighborhood and school
- . learning to work with others
- . developing relationships with the opposite sex
- . becoming independent
- . accepting responsibility and the dependency of others
- . finding satisfaction in work and in relationships with others

In this brainstorming activity, parents will think about what achievements in social development they might expect of a person at the ages of four, 14, 34 and 64. Write these numbers at the top of four large sheets of chart paper, so that there is a separate paper for each age. Hang up the papers where all can see. Then ask parents to brainstorm a list of social achievements or tasks for each age beginning with age four. Ask for ideas on what our society expects a four-year old to be able to do in relation to others--at home, in the neighborhood, and at school.

When you get to the end of the first sheet of paper, move on to the next age, 14. Explain that when you have completed all four sheets, parents will have an opportunity to add to the lists if they wish. Continue with ages 34 and 64, focusing on the tasks of work, responsibility, and personal and family relationships.

When the four lists are complete, read each one aloud, asking if parents want to add or change anything on them. Then lead a discussion using the following questions as a guide:

Are any of the lists similar?

Are any of the tasks of social development accomplished once and for all? Do some tasks keep reappearing in different forms and at different ages?

Do you think every person is capable of these accomplishments?

Do you think outside circumstances influence a person's ability to accomplish these tasks of growing up?

What kinds of support does a person need in developing socially?

Do you know any older people who seem to have accomplished these tasks and are satisfied with their lives and relationships as they approach old age? Can you tell us about them?

Encourage parents to share the "success stories" of friends or relatives who, perhaps, in spite of their circumstances, have found life fulfilling. Close by thanking parents for contributing to the brainstorming and discussion and for sharing so much with each other.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session 1 using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of

the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved.

Over The Years

Session 2

From Generation to Generation

Goals

To think about how you raise your children and how your parents raised you.

To identify the characteristics of a parent which you think are important.

To think about why it is difficult for parents to discuss sexuality with their children.

To think about what is important in a relationship between a man and a woman.

Agenda

How Many of You. . .?

Ideal Parent

What My Mother Never Told Me

What's Important in Love

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda

Session 2: From Generation to Generation

This session focuses on relationships between men and women, parents and children, and one generation and the next. Parents begin by comparing the way they were raised with the way they raise their children. After brainstorming the characteristics which an "ideal" parent would have, they discuss the pressures on parents today and how the role of parents has changed over the years. Next, parents role-play situations in which the subject of sexuality comes up between a parent and child and consider how parents develop values about sexuality and convey them to their children. Finally, parents discuss what is important in a relationship between a man and a woman.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF SESSION

Our relationship with our parents and our experience of their parenting is a great influence on the kind of parents we will be. As parents, we often imitate our own parents' attitudes and

methods of child-rearing. Sometimes we intentionally do things differently. Becoming aware of our own parents' influence on our child-rearing styles helps us to make clearer decisions about how we want to raise our children.

Most of us have an image of the kind of parent we would like to be. Our concept of this "ideal" parent is developed from many sources -- our parents, memories of our childhood, our spouse's and children's expectations, our friends' views, and images from books, television, magazines and movies, to name a few. The demands of our children, the limits of our own capacities, and the pressures of life today make it hard to achieve perfection, however. Adjusting our ideals to fit our own situation can make life more satisfying for ourselves and our children alike.

Many of us find it hard to talk to our children about some of the most important aspects of life. One of these is sexuality, that is, all of the differences between males and females that distinguish them from each other and attract them to each other. Much of the problem is due to uncertainty about our own values relating to

sexuality, which is understandable considering the mixed messages on the subject which we receive from society. As parents, we are called upon to think about and define our own values so that we can communicate them to our children. This makes the job of talking about sexuality with our children much easier.

Parenting begins with the relationship between a man and a woman; their sexual union produces a child. That relationship, whether it endures or not, affects both parents and child. Looking closely at the qualities that are important in a relationship between a man and a woman is useful to parents as they continue to build or seek a satisfying relationship with someone of the opposite sex. In addition, children benefit when their parents clarify their values and expectations of the opposite sex; children's home life is more likely to be stable and their future relationships with the opposite sex more satisfying.

GOALS OF SESSION 2

To think about how you raise your children and how your parents raised you.

To identify the characteristics of a parent which you think are important.

To think about why it is difficult for parents to discuss sexuality with their children.

To think about what is important in a relationship between a man and a woman.

AGENDA

How Many of You ...?

Ideal Parent

What My Mother Never Told Me

What's Important in Love

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session

Information sheet #1

Several sheets of large chart paper, felt-tip markers, and tacks or tape

Paper and pencils for small groups

Planning Ahead

The first step in planning ahead is to read the session plan and information sheets carefully. In particular, review the instructions for role-playing. Plan how to arrange the room so that the transitions from large group to small group and back again go smoothly.

Getting Started

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity of your choice to reacquaint parents with each other and to help them feel comfortable in the group. Discuss the goals and agenda of the session using the large chart you prepared as well as information sheet #1. Invite parents to comment or ask questions.

How Many of You...?

(Approximately 20 minutes)

Purpose: To think about how you raise your children and how your parents raised you.

Explain to parents that you are going to ask some questions about how they raise their preschool children and how their parents raised them at the same age. Ask them to raise their hands to respond to the following questions:

> How many of you allow your child to pick out what clothes to wear in the morning? How many of you were allowed of pick out your clothes at that age?
>
> How many of you give your child jobs to do at home? How many of you had jobs to do at home?
>
> How many of you allow your child to cross the street alone? How many of you were allowed to cross the street alone at the same age?
>
> How many of you punish your child for disobedience? How many of you were punished for disobedience?
>
> How many of you put your child to bed at a certain time? How many of you were put to bed at a certain time?
>
> How many of you give your child spending money? How many of you were given spending money?

Lead a discussion of the questions by asking parents if they would like to add to or explain any of their responses. You might want to select

one or two questions and ask parents for their reactions to it. Then ask parents if they think that they are raising their children pretty much as their parents raised them. What might account for any differences in child-rearing methods?

Bring the discussion to a close saying that in the next activity they will have a chance to look more closely at the role of a parent.

Ideal Parent

(Approximately 40 minutes)

Purposes: To identify the characteristics of a parent which you think are important. To think about where your ideas of what is ideal came from.

To consider why it is hard for parents to be ideal.

To think about how the ideal parent has changed over the years.

Begin by telling parents that they will be using the technique of brainstorming to share their ideas about what an ideal parent (if one ever existed) would be like. Review the rules of brainstorming using information sheet #2 from the previous session as a guide.

Take a fresh sheet of chart paper and write "Ideal Parent" at the top of it. Hang it where all can see it. Ask parents to brainstorm a list of the qualities that an ideal parent would have. If necessary, give some examples such as "kind," "patient" or "listens to child." Remember to write exactly what the parents say and to allow pauses or periods of silence during the brainstorming process to give parents time to think or get ready to speak out.

When you are sure that the parents have finished the list, read it over to them. Ask if they have any comments or questions about it. Then lead a discussion about it using the following questions:

> Would it be possible for any one person to have all these qualities?
>
> Would you like to be this parent? Why or why not?
>
> Would you like to be the child of this parent? Why or why not?
>
> Where do we get our ideas of what makes an ideal parent?
>
> Why can't parents always be ideal?
>
> What would a "good enough" parent be like? Would your children be satisfied to have a "good enough" parent instead of an ideal one? Would you be satisfied to be a "good enough" parent?

If our parents had brainstormed a list of "ideal parent" characteristics, do you think they would have been the same as ours? How has the job of parenting changed since we were young?

End the discussion by thanking parents for sharing their ideas with each other.

What My Mother Never Told Me

(Approximately 50 minutes)

Purposes: To identify some topics which are difficult for parents to discuss with their children.

To think about why it is hard for parents to discuss sexuality with their children.

To role-play situations in which the subject of sexuality is raised between a parent and child.

To think about sexuality in terms of your own values.

Begin this activity by remarking to parents that the job of parenting is not easy. Often parents find it hard to talk to their children about some of the most important aspects of life. Ask the group if there were any subjects that their own parents had trouble talking to them about. When the participants have named a few topics, comment that one of the most difficult

subjects for parents to deal with is sexuality which includes all the distinctions between sexes -- physical, emotional and social -- as well as their relationships with each other. Then lead a brief discussion using the following questions:

> Why might parents find it hard to discuss sexuality with their children?
>
> Other than talking to children, what are some ways that parents give children messages about sexuality?
>
> How do children come to know their parents' attitudes toward their bodies? Toward the opposite sex? Toward procreation?

End the discussion by commenting to parents that, while parents convey their attitudes toward sexuality to children in many subtle ways, some situations require a more direct approach -- parents must take some action, answer a question, or provide some information. Explain that the group will be role-playing a few of these situations next. Remind parents that role-playing is a method of acting out an imaginary situation as if it were really happening now. The situation is described to the role-player who then fills the role according to how he or she thinks it would feel to be in that situation.

Next, choose one of the role-play situations described on the next page and read the situation aloud to the whole group. (Do not read the briefings to the whole group.) Ask for two volunteers to play the two parts. Take each volunteer aside and read the briefing to him or her privately. Remind the players that, as they put themselves in someone else's shoes in the role-play, they should follow their own feelings and act as they would if they were really in that situation.

Ask the role-players to begin. Stop the role-playing when the parent has handled the situation in some way or responded to the child's questions. Do not let the role-play go on too long. The purpose is to try one way of responding and see what effect that has on the child. Cut the role-playing as soon as you have enough action to discuss.

After the role-play, ask the observers to comment on what they saw and felt. Lead a brief discussion using the following questions:

Was the behavior of the players believable?

Situation	Private Briefing for Role-Player #1	Private Briefing for Role-Player #2
A parent finds his or her preschool age son and daughter playing in the bathroom with their clothes off. (Three role-players are needed)	You are the parent. You want the children to get dressed right away.	You are the son or daughter. You are having fun playing and can't understand why you have to get dressed. (Use same briefing for son and daughter)
A parent has taken his or her four-year old son to visit his aunt who has a new baby. The son takes great interest in the baby and is allowed to hold the baby. He remarks, "When I grow up, I'm going to have a baby, just like Aunt Betty."	You are the parent. You are surprised by your son's remark.	You are the four-year old boy. You think the new baby is so cute. You want to have one too.
A parent is returning from a wedding with his or her four-year old daughter. The daughter asks, "Why do people get married?"	You are the parent. You are not quite sure what kind of information your child wants.	You are the four-year old daughter. You know that some parents are married and some aren't. You want to know what people get married for.

Did the parent have a hard time handling the situation? How could you tell?

What messages about sexuality did the parent give the child?

Was the child satisfied with the parent's response?

Next, ask the role-players to comment on what happened and to share their briefings with the observers. In particular, ask the parent to comment on his/her feelings or concerns about handling the situation and ask the child about his/her satisfaction with the parent's response. Ask the role-players and observers to suggest other ways that parent could have handled the situation.

Next, try another role-play with two new players. Follow the same procedures as before:

Read the situation aloud to the whole group.

Brief the players privately.

Start the role-play and cut the action when enough has occurred to discuss.

Ask for comments from the observers first and then from the players.

If time permits, try a third role-play repeating the previous procedure.

Allow about ten minutes at the end of this activity for a discussion of how parents' values influence the way they deal with sexuality. Begin by commenting to parents that it is natural that different parents have different views on how to handle situations involving sexuality because they have different backgrounds, experiences, and values. Lead a discussion using the following questions:

> Where do our values about sexuality come from?
>
> Where do we get our views of what is good and what is bad? What is right and what is wrong? What is healthy and what is not?
>
> What influence do our families have on our attitude toward sexuality? How do the people with whom we associate affect us? Do our own experiences affect our view of sexuality?
>
> What part do our religious convictions play in our view of sexuality? How does the media--television, radio, magazines and books--influence our thoughts about sexuality?
>
> Is it possible to have conflicting views about sex? How might such a conflict or lack of certainty affect our ability to deal with our children's sexuality?
>
> What messages about sexuality do we want to give our children?

Draw the discussion to a close by commenting that, with all the different messages we hear

about sex, it is no wonder that we have a hard time handling the subject with our children. Thank parents for their willingness to role-play and to share their ideas about this important subject.

What's Important in Love?

(Approximately 40 minutes)

Purposes: To consider what characteristics or elements are important in a relationship between a man and a woman.

To look at the reasons we have for valuing particular elements in a love relationship.

Begin by commenting to parents that after talking about sexuality -- what distinguishes a man from a woman and what attracts them to each other -- it is natural to move on to the subject of love, what keeps them together. Explain that in this activity parents will brainstorm a list of characteristics or elements which are important in a relationship between a man and a woman.

Review the rules for brainstorming, using the information sheet from the last session or the chart you prepared. Then write "What's Important

in Love" at the top of a large sheet of chart paper and hang it where all can see it. Ask parents to think of what qualities are important in a relationship between a man and a woman, what things make the relationship satisfying and long-lasting. Remind parents that they can say whatever comes to mind; their ideas might trigger the thoughts of other parents. When the list is complete, give parents a chance to ask questions about the things on the list or to explain more fully what they meant.

Next, ask parents to form small groups with four or five in each group. Give each group one pad of paper and a pencil and ask them to choose a recorder, someone who will write down their ideas. Explain that each group is to choose the five most important characteristics of a good relationship from the list they just brainstormed. After the group members agree on the five characteristics, they should rank them in order of importance. That is, they should put #1 in front of the trait they believe is most valuable, #2 in front of the next most important characteristic, and so on. Urge parents to make clear what each

characteristic means to them by giving examples, as they discuss the characteristics.

IMPORTANT: No particular ordering is "correct." The parents will not come up with one "answer." The value of the task lies in thinking about and discussing the importance of various qualities.

When the groups finish, ask the recorder from each to read aloud the traits beginning with number one. See if any two groups came up with identical lists. Comment to parents that it is unlikely that any two groups or any two people would come up with the same list. A person's values or ideas of what is important depends on many things such as his or her personality, past experiences, circumstances, traditions, and culture, to name a few. Close by thanking parents for sharing so much with each other.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 15 minutes)

Summarize the activities of Session 2 using the agenda as a guide. Then review the goals of

the session. Ask parents for their comments on how well the goals were achieved.

Session 3

Our New Land and Old

Goals

To share information about your family's origins with the group.

To consider how immigrants' experiences in America were affected by the way they came here.

To look at the messages about our race or ethnic group that we receive from those around us.

To consider ways to teach our children about their heritage and to encourage them to take pride in their race and ethnic group.

Agenda

Where Did We Come From?

Some Came by Sea

Coming to Know Who We Are

Remembering Roots, Treasuring Traditions

Information Sheets

Goals & Agenda
Some Came by Sea

Some Came by Sea

Travel by sea was part of the long journey many immigrants took from their familiar homeland to the new land called America. For more than three centuries, groups of immigrants have come by sea, through storms and sickness, fear and danger, to our shores. For each group, however, the voyage was different.

Compare the ways the following groups of immigrants came to America.

- Pilgrims on the Mayflower in the 1600's.
- Africans on slave ships in the 1700's.
- Europeans in steerage (lowest class on the ship) in the 1800's.
- "Boat People" — Vietnamese, Haitians, and Cubans — in small boats in the 1900's.

For each group, discuss the following questions:

- What motivated the immigrants to come?
- What was their view or image of America?
- How did the people who were already here look on the newcomers?
- Did the immigrants "old ways" help or hinder them?
- Do the ways the immigrants came still affect the lives of their descendants today? If so, how?
- Are people's lives in America today determined entirely by how their ancestors arrived here? What other factors influence their attitudes, opportunities and achievements?

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Session 3: Our New Land and Old

In this last session of LOOKING AT LIFE OVER THE YEARS, parents will look at how the racial and ethnic differences of Americans affect their lives and how parents can promote children's pride in their heritage. Parents begin by brainstorming a list of the places of origin of Americans and share information about how their own ancestors began life in America. Then they compare the way four groups of immigrants came to America and discuss how the way they came affected their lives here. Next, they choose one racial or ethnic group and discuss what messages about their worth the group receives from society. Parents practice handling racial and ethnic differences with their children through role-play. Then they brainstorm a list of ways to help children take pride in their heritage.

UNDERLYING THEMES OF THE SESSION

For more than three centuries, people from all over the world have come, and are still coming, to America to make their home. Each group of immigrants has brought a unique heritage with them which has influenced their lives here, as well as the lives of those who were here before them. How each group came (eagerly, desperately, or by force) and how they saw America (a haven, a promised land, or a prison) has affected their experience of the new country. The way others looked upon them affected their experience, too. For the descendants of past immigrants as well as for first generation Americans, the journey to America cannot be forgotten.

Because living in America means living with others different from ourselves, coming to know who we are is important. Each racial and ethnic group receives many messages about their self-worth from society. Seeing our image reflected in others' eyes affects our own view of ourselves. For an accurate view, we must sift through the messages we receive to find the truth about ourselves. And we must practice sending

ourselves and our children the positive messages we deserve.

Daily life provides many occasions for sharing our people's culture and traditions with our children. Activities such as dressing, eating, talking about school, friends and the news provide informal opportunities for parents to promote children's pride in their appearance, their tastes, their background, and their differences from others. In addition to these, parents, schools, churches, and community groups can create opportunities to teach children about their history -- the long journey from their old land, their progress in America, and their contributions to society today. They can also introduce children to their people's contributions to the wide variety of art, music, food, dress, and celebrations which enrich our lives today.

GOALS OF SESSION 3

To share information about your family's origins with the group.

To consider how immigrants' experiences in America were affected by the way they came here.

To look at the messages about our race or ethnic group that we receive from those around us.

To consider ways to teach our children about their heritage and to encourage them to take pride in their race and ethnic group.

AGENDA

Where Did We Come From?

Some Came By Sea

Coming to Know Who We Are

Remembering Roots, Treasuring Traditions

MATERIALS

Large chart of goals and agenda for session

Information sheets #1 and #2

Several sheets of large chart paper, felt tip markers, and tacks or tape

Planning Ahead

Prepare for this session by reading the session plan and information sheets carefully. Then plan how you will conduct the award ceremony and celebrate the completion of the program. You might invite parents to bring in a variety of ethnic dishes to share with others.

Getting Started

(Approximately 10 minutes)

Begin with a warm-up activity. Then discuss the goals and agenda for this session using the large chart you prepared as well as information sheet #1.

Where Did We All Come From?

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To identify some of the places from which the ancestors of Americans came.

To share your own origins with the group.

Begin by commenting to parents that the people of America have many different origins. Some descended from the original people who lived on this land, but most are the offspring of people who came to the United States from somewhere else. Explain that the group will brainstorm a list of places from which Americans have come. (The idea is to see the wide variety of places, rather than to list them all.)

Review the rules of brainstorming, then take a large sheet of chart paper and hang it where all can see. Ask parents to name some places from which Americans have come. This activity should move along rather quickly; you can bring it to a close as soon as parents seem to have given their ideas and the pace slows down.

Next, ask each parent to tell the group a little about his or her own origins--where their ancestors were born and how they got to America. If parents know any details of their ancestors' arrivals, their travels in America, or where they settled down, they could include that information, too. You might begin by sharing your own origins, if parents seem reluctant to go first. When

everyone has had a turn, thank the parents for sharing the information with each other.

Some Came by Sea

(Approximately 30 minutes)

Purposes: To compare the way four groups of immigrants came to America.

To think about how the way they came affected their experiences here.

Explain to parents that in this activity they will be looking at how some immigrants came to America and how the way they came affected their lives here and those of their descendants. Distribute information sheet #2 and read the entire sheet aloud. Then, beginning with the Pilgrims, discuss the questions in terms of their experience. Next, discuss the Africans' experience and so on. You need not stick to the questions rigidly, but rather use them to guide the discussion and keep it on track. If parents bring up the experiences of Americans not mentioned on the information sheet, you can guide the discussion in much the same way using those questions on the information sheet which apply. Remember that the purpose is to look at how a

cultural or ethnic group's past experience affects, but not limits, the lives of individuals today.

Bring the discussion to a close by commenting that, while our ancestors would probably be saddened to know that some of their pain and hardships are still felt today, they undoubtedly would be pleased to see the pride, persistence and progress of their children's children. Thank parents for sharing their thoughts with each other.

Coming to Know Who We Are

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Purposes: To look at the messages about our race or ethnic group that we receive from those around us.

To think about how to give our children positive messages about themselves as members of a particular race or ethnic group.

Begin by commenting to parents that one of the things they discussed in the previous activity was how other people looked upon their ancestors when they came to America.

The slaves, as well as most immigrants, received messages from those around them that devalued them, that said, "You're not as good as us, you're not worth as much as us, you're inferior." Today, many racial and ethnic groups continue to receive negative messages about their worth, in one form or another. Some of these messages are obvious, but many are subtle.

Ask parents to choose one racial or ethnic group to discuss using the following questions:

> What messages about the group of people do we get from the media -- TV, radio, newspaper and magazines?
>
> What messages do we get from businesses through their advertising? through their hiring practices?
>
> What messages do we get from politicians? from religious leaders?
>
> What messages about the ethnic group's worth do we get from members of that group?

These questions are likely to provide a lively, or even heated, discussion. Keep the discussion on track by focusing on the "messages." Accept differences of opinion as natural parts of the discussion, commenting, if necessary, that two people can receive the same message in a different

way, depending on such things as their personality and experience.

Move this discussion along with the following questions:

> What messages about themselves do you think the particular group under discussion would like to receive?
>
> What are some ways members of <u>any</u> group can give themselves and each other positive messages about such things as their appearance, their capabilities, their history, and their differences from other groups?
>
> How can parents foster in children a sense of pride in their race or ethnic group? How can they also foster pride in being an American?

Draw the discussion to a close by saying that the group will now have a chance to role-play some situations between a parent and child in which the subject of racial and ethnic differences comes up.

Choose one of the three role-plays on the following page. Read the description of the situation aloud to the group and ask for volunteers to play the parts of the parents and child. Read the briefings privately to each role-player. Begin the role-play and then cut the

Situation	Private Briefing for Role-Player #1	Private Briefing for Role-Player #2
A mother has just washed her young daughter's hair. The child begs her mother to give her the same hair style as that of her classmate, Susie. The mother has never seen Susie.	You are the mother. You do not know if Susie's hair style will be suitable for your daughter.	You are the daughter. You just love Susie's hair. Everyone says how pretty it looks. You want hair just like hers.
A child comes home from school and asks his or her parent if it is true that no one of their race or ethnic group (choose one appropriate for your group) can be President of the United States.	You are the parent. You are not sure who told your child this, but you are angry inside about it.	You are the child. You wonder if what you heard is true. If it is true, it doesn't seem fair. If it is not true, you wonder why you were told that.
A child comes home from school and tells his or her parent that the class is learning about all the different people in our country. The teacher wants each child to tell what is special about his or her people or ethnic group.	You are the parent. You are not sure what to tell your child or what your child can understand.	You are the child. You don't know what is special about your people, but you want to have something to say. You want the other kids to think you are important.

action when the child has clearly expressed his or her concerns and the parent has responded. Ask for comments from the observers first and then from the role-players.

Lead a discussion using the following questions:

> What do you think the parent was feeling in the situation? Did the parent want to share his or her feelings with the child?
>
> Did the parent have enough information to respond to the question? Did the parent know how to get the information he or she needed?
>
> What messages about "who we are" did the parent give the child?
>
> Did the child seem satisfied with the parent's response? Why or why not?

Repeat the role-play, if you wish, with the parent trying out a different way of responding or try another role-play. Follow the same procedure as before for conducting and discussing the role-play.

Allow about five minutes at the end of this activity to discuss the following questions:

> How did the parents' own feelings in the situations affect the way they responded to their children?

What messages did the parents want to give the children in the situations?

Was it difficult for parents to give the message they wanted to give? What helped or hindered them?

Draw the discussion to a close by saying that in the next activity parents will have a chance to share their ideas about how to help their children learn about their heritage and take pride in who they are.

Remembering Roots, Treasuring Tradition

(Approximately 25 minutes)

Purpose: To consider ways to teach our children about their heritage and to encourage them to take pride in their race and ethnic group.

Begin by commenting to parents that, although it is probably impossible to protect children from receiving some negative messages about their race or ethnic group, parents can make an effort to give their children positive messages about their heritage. Some opportunities for giving positive messages come naturally in everyday life. However, it is often necessary to create situations in which children can learn about their

people -- their art, music, food, dress, celebrations, traditions, and accomplishments.

In this activity, the group will brainstorm a list of ways to help children learn about and appreciate their heritage. After reviewing the rules of brainstorming, take out a large sheet of chart paper and write "Helping Pride Grow" at the top. Then ask the group for examples of how parents can teach their children about their people's roots, traditions, accomplishments, and ways of celebrating and enjoying life. When the list is complete, invite parents to comment or ask questions. Then thank parents for sharing their ideas with each other.

Summary and Evaluation

(Approximately 25 minutes)

At this point you should take a few moments to review with parents what they have done in LOOKING AT LIFE OVER THE YEARS. You could use the goals and agenda for each session as guides. Then ask parents for their comments on the program and

on their experience as part of the group. When everyone who wishes to comment or just say good-bye has had a chance to do so, thank parents for their unique contributions to the group and award each one a certificate of completion of the program. This can be done in the way you think is most appropriate for your group. Then it's time to celebrate and enjoy the refreshments. You might even play some party games to continue the theme of the session.

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